

Arch-Bishop

TILLOTSON'S

Eleventh Volume.



The most Reverend
D^r JOHN TILLOTSON
late Arch Bishop of Canterbury.

F I F T E E N
S E R M O N S
O N
Several Subjects.

viz.

Of the Form and the Power of Godliness.	Of Diligence in our general and particular Calling.
Of the Necessity of Good Works.	Of the Blessedness of Giving, more than that of Receiving.
Of doing all to the Glory of God.	The Evil of corrupt Commu- nication.
Doing good, a security against Injuries from men.	The true Remedy against the Troubles of Life.

By the Most Reverend
Dr. J O H N T I L L O T S O N,
Late Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*.

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SERMON

S E R M O N I.

Of the Form, and the Power of
Godliness.

The first Sermon on ~~this~~ Text.

2 TIM. III. 5.

*Having a Form of Godliness, but deny-
ing the Power thereof.*

THE Apostle in these words,
distinguishes two things in
Religion, which do not, but
ought always to go together, viz. the
Shew and Pretence of Religion, and
the Life and Power of it. He con-
demns neither, but blames the sepa-
rating of them. The latter indeed
B cannot

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cannot be without the first; for where-
ever Religion really is, there will be
some appearance of it: But the for-
mer may be, and often is, without
the latter. Men may make a great
Shew of Religion, and yet be very
destitute of the Power of it. And
such were those Persons the Apostle
describes here in the Text; they
were guilty of the greatest faults and
vices in their lives, but thought to
cloak all these by an outward shew
and appearance of Godliness. *Having
a form of Godliness, but denying the
power thereof.*

The word *μὴ ὄφειλοντες*, which is here
translated *Form*, signifies the shew or
image of a thing, which is dead and
ineffectual: In opposition to the reali-
ty and life, which is quick and pow-
erful. And, I think, this word is but
once more us'd in the New Testament,
and much in the same sense, *viz.* for
an empty and ineffectual knowledge
of Religion without the practice of
it. *Rom. 2. 17, 20, 21.* The Apo-
stle there speaks of some pharisaical
Jews, who gloried in their knowledge
of the Law, but violated it in their
practice,

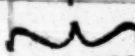
A Form of Godliness described.

3

practice. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and reatest in the law, and hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that preachest, a man should not steal, dost thou steal? So that a *Form of Godliness* signifies an empty shew and profession of Religion, without the real effects of it.

Serm. I.

And they who are destitute of these, are said to *deny the Power of Religion*. It is usual in several Languages to draw Metaphors from words to actions; and men are said to contradict or deny any thing, when they do contrary to what they pretend; and so this phrase is elsewhere used, *Tit. i. 10. They profess to know God, but in works they deny him. 1 Tim. 5. 8. If any man provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith.* The Apostle does not mean that such an one denies the Faith by an express declaration in words, but by actions so contradictory to the Christian Faith, as an infidel would hardly do. He

 *hath denied the faith, and is worse*
 Vol. XI. *than an Infidel.*

In the handling of these words, I shall do these *four* things.

First, Shew wherein a *Form of Godliness* consists.

Secondly, Wherein the *Power of it* lies.

Thirdly, Give some Marks and Characters whereby we may know when these are separated, when *the Form of Godliness* is destitute of *the Power*.

Fourthly, Shew that a meer *Form of Godliness* without *the Power of it*, is insignificant to all the great Ends and Purposes of Religion.

First, To shew wherein a *Form of Godliness* does consist. In general it consists in an external shew and profession of Religion, or of any eminent part of it, or of that which is reputed to be so; and a *Form of Religion* is more or less compleat, according to the extent of it. Some pitch upon one part
 of

of Religion, and set themselves chiefly Serm. I.
to make a shew of that ; others take
in more parts of it, and endeavour
to express and counterfeit them ; so
that *the Forms* of Religion are various
and different, and not to be reduced
to any fixt and constant standard ;
but they commonly appear in some
one or more of these shapes.

I. An External Devotion.

II. An Orthodox Profession of the
Christian Faith.

III. Enthusiasm and pretence to
Inspiration.

IV. A great external shew of mor-
tification.

V. An imperfect Repentance and
partial Reformation.

VI. The appearance and ostentati-
on of some particular Grace and
Virtue.

VII. A great zeal for some Party,
B 3 or

VIII. Silliness and freakishness, and either a pretended or real ignorance in the common affairs and concerns of human life.

IX. Much noise and talk about Religion.

These are the several Forms of Religion which men are wont to assume. Not that these do always go singly; but sometimes men put on one, sometimes more of them, as may best serve their several turns and interests. Nor would I be understood to condemn all these; for several of these particulars which I have mention'd are good in themselves, and necessary parts of Religion; but being destitute of other things wherein the life of Religion doth consist, they are but *a Form of Godliness*.

I. External Devotion. This is the most common *Form* of Religion, and easiest to be assum'd, and therefore it is that so many take it up. And this

is good in it self, and a necessary part of Religion : but if there be no more than this, it is a meer image and picture of Religion, abominable to God, and fulsome and odious to discerning men. Serm. I.

Now this external Devotion shews it self more especially these *two* ways.

1. In a frequent and diligent use of the Means and Instruments of Religion.

2. In a curious and nice regard to the Modes and Circumstances of performing these.

1. In a frequent and diligent use of the Means and Instruments of Religion, such as Prayer, Reading, and Hearing the word of God, and receiving of the blessed Sacrament. These are not the Life of Religion, the great End and Design of it, but the Means and Instruments which God hath appointed for the begetting and increasing of Holiness and Virtue in us. Many exercise themselves in these with

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great constancy and Devotion, pray to God, and read the Bible frequently, go to Church duly, and hear God's word attentively, and receive the Sacrament reverently, and behave themselves devoutly in all parts of publick Worship: and yet all this may be but a meer *Form*, and certainly is no more, whete the great end of all this is neglected, and men do not sincerely endeavour to do what God's Word directs them to, and what they daily pray to God to enable them to do.

For all these Means are in order to some farther Effect and Design. We read and hear the Word of God, that we may know his Will, and that we may do it; that by the Precepts and Counsels of the Holy Scriptures we may learn and understand our Duty; and by the Motives and Arguments which are there offer'd to us, we may effectually be perswaded to the practice of it. We pray to God, not only for the forgiveness of our sins, but for his Grace and Assistance, to enable us to mortifie and subdue them, and to proceed in all Virtue
and

and Godliness of living. We receive the Sacrament, to enflame our love to God and our blessed Saviour, to excite in us a greater hatred of sin, and to confirm us in the purpose and resolution of well-doing. These are the great Ends for which God hath appointed all these helps and means, and if these Ends be not obtain'd, *in vain do we worship God*, all our Religion is but meer shew and pageantry. We are but like the people God himself describes, *Isa. 29. 13. This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their Lips do they honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.* And like those, *Ezek. 33. 30, 31, 32. who spake one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they*

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they do them not. This is not to worship God, but impudently to affront him ; and if we take this for Religion, we put the grossest cheat imaginable upon our selves. Hear how God challenges the people of Israel upon this account, Jer. 7. 2, 3, 4, &c. Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel ; Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. This is the great end of all Religious Worship and Devotion, the Reformation of our lives and actions ; and if it have not this effect, it is a cheat. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. For if ye thorowly amend your ways, and your doings ; if ye thorowly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour ; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other Gods to your hurt : Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers for ever and ever. Behold, ye trust in lying

lying words that cannot profit. Will ye  Steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear fasly, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other Gods, whom ye know not : and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my Name, and say, we are delivered to do all these Abominations ? What greater impudence can there be, than to worship God devoutly, and to live wickedly ? This is to declare that we mock God under a pretence of serving him ; or else that we believe, that God whom we Worship allows these abominations, and is pleas'd with them.

Serm. I.

2. Others make this *Form* of external Devotion yet more compleat, by a curious and nice regard to the Modes and Circumstances of performing the Duties of Religion. They are very punctual and exact in all their carriage and gestures, as if they minded nothing else but the outward part of Religion.

Not but that great Humility and Reverence does very well become men in their addresles to God : but then
we

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we must be sure that this external Reverence be a signification of the inward and real Devotion of our Minds. For if it be separated from this, it is not Devotion, but superstition; it is not *to worship God in Spirit and in truth*, but in bodily shew and appearance only; not to honour the Divine Majesty, but to fawn upon him and flatter him. And where men are very intent upon these things, and endeavour to outstrip other people in voluntary expressions of outward Devotion, it too often happens that such persons are destitute of the substance and reality of Religion. They are like the formal complementing sort of People in civil conversation, who commonly have very little in them, and notwithstanding all their smooth outside and appearance, they have neither that solidity nor sincerity which is in many a plain ordinary Man.

II. An orthodox Profession of the Christian Faith. This is another *Form of Religion*, which the more knowing and inquisitive sort of men are apt to take up and rest in. And this

this is that which in the Jewish Religion the Apostle calls a *Form of knowledge, and of the truth in the Lord.* Serm. I.

And this is good as far as it goes. Bnt then it must not rest only in the brain, but descend from thence upon the heart and life : Otherwise a Man may have this *Form of Godliness*, and yet be a *denyer of the Power* of it. St. Paul puts this very case, that a Man may have the theory and knowledge of Religion, and yet if it do not produce the fruits of a good life, it is nothing worth, 1 Cor. 12. 2. *Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity; I am nothing.* And the reason is plain, because the knowledge of Religion is only in order to the practice of it ; and an Article or Proposition of Faith is an idle thing, if it do not produce such actions as the belief of such a Proposition doth require.

There


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There are many persons in the World very solicitous about an orthodox belief, and mightily concern'd to know what the Scriptures, but especially what the Councils and Fathers, have declar'd in such a matter ; and they are nice and scrupulous in these things, even to the utmost punctilio's, and will with a most unchristian passion contend for the Christian Faith : and yet perhaps all this while they can allow themselves in plain sins, and in the practice of such things as are in Scripture as clearly forbidden to be done, as any thing is there commanded to be believ'd. Whereas Religion does not consist so much in nicety and subtilty of belief, as in integrity and innocency of life ; and the truest and most Orthodox perswasion in matters of Religion, is but a meer *Form* and *Image*, if it be not accompanied with an answerable practice ; yea like the *Image* represented to *Nebuchadnezzar* in his dream, *whose head was of fine gold, but the legs and feet were Iron and Clay.*

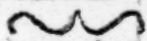
Now



Not but that a right belief is of great concernment in Religion ; but then this belief must be prosecuted into the proper and genuin consequences of it upon our lives : If it be not, it is unhappy for men that they believe so well, when they live so ill. The Devils have a right Faith, St. James tells us, *they believe and tremble.* And indeed none have so much reason to tremble, as those who believe the Principles of Religion, and yet are conscious to themselves that they live contrary to them ; because of all Persons in the World they are the most inexcusable.

III. Another *Form of Religion* which many take upon them is Enthusiasm, and pretence to inspiration. And this is a very glorious *Form*, which is apt to dazle and amuse the ignorant, because they know not what to make of it. It seems to be something strange and extraordinary, and yet 'tis nothing but what every Man that has confidence enough may pretend to.

There


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There is no Christian doubts but that the Spirit of God hath heretofore inspir'd men in an extraordinary manner, and that he may do so again when he pleases. But since the great and standing revelation of the Gospel, we have reason not to be rash in giving heed to such pretences. If those who pretend to inspiration declare nothing but what is reveal'd in the Gospel already, their inspiration is needless ; if they declare any thing contrary thereto, we are sufficiently cautioned against them ; if any thing besides the Revelation of the Gospel, but not contrary to it, then we are to expect what evidence they bring for their inspiration. For God does not inspire men for their own sakes, but for the sake of others ; and another Man's inspiration is nothing to me, unless he can satisfie me that he is inspir'd. For either I must believe every one that pretends to inspiration, or those only that can make good their pretence. Not every one, for then I yield up my self to the mercy of every confident Man to lead me into what delusions he pleases.

If

If I believe only those who are able to make good this pretence, then am I in no great danger; for nothing less than a Miracle can give me reasonable assurance of another Man's inspiration; and I think few or none of our modern Enthusiasts have so much as pretended to Miracles. So that this Form of Religion is calculated only to impose upon the ignorant, but signifies little among the steady and considerate sort of people.

Nay if this pretence were real, yet it may be no more than a *Form of Religion*. For the Apostle supposes that men may *have the gift of Prophecy*, and yet *want Charity, without which they are nothing*. And our Saviour tells us, that many shall plead at the day of Judgment, *Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out Devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?* And yet these very Persons for all this may be *workers of iniquity*, and such as our Lord will bid to depart from him.

IV. A great external shew of Mortification.

C

This

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This the Pharisees of old did much applaud themselves in, they *fasted twice a week*. And this is still a great part of the Religion of many in the *Romish Church*; they impose strict penalties and corporal severities upon themselves; abstain from several sorts of Meats and Drinks, watch and afflict their Bodies with several sorts of rigours: whereas one severe resolution of a good life well prosecuted, is a thousand times better than all this

For experience shews us, that men may be very severe to their bodies, and yet favourable to their lusts. The Pharisees indeed *fasted often*, but they were very ravenous in another kind, *they devoured widows houses*. It is possible that men may kill themselves by corporal austerities, and yet never mortifie one lust; they may submit to a thousand penances, and yet never truly repent of one sin; they may turn Pilgrims, and go as far as *Jerusalem* to visit our Saviour's Sepulchre, and yet never *know the power of his death*.

Fasting

Fasting may be a good instrument of Religion, if it be discreetly used ; and as it may be used, there may be no Religion in it. But as for those other kind of severities, they are absurd and superstitious, and taken up upon a great mistake of the Nature of God ; as if he were never well pleas'd, but when we do something very displeasing to our selves ; as if he were extremely delighted in the misery and torment of his Creatures ; and to be cruel and unmerciful to our selves, were the only way to move his compassion towards us.

These are barbarous and heathenish conceits of God ; and the absurd practices grounded upon them are nowhere recommended to us in Scripture, nor have any example there, but only in *Baal's* Priests, who lanced and cut themselves, believing that to be a good way to encline their Gods to hear them. These are voluntary Superstitions, which God hath required at no Man's hands. And no wise Man can doubt, but that he that really mortifies his lusts, and subdues his

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passions, may be a good man, though he never whipt himself in all his life ; and that he that lives soberly, and righteously, and godly, may justly be accounted Religious, without turning vagrant, and rambling idly up and down the world. These are such *Forms of Religion* as can have no Esteem and Reputation, but in a very superstitious Church and Age.

V. An imperfect Repentance, and partial Reformation.

By an imperfect Repentance, I mean a trouble and sorrow for sin, without the forsaking of it, and the amendment of our lives ; or when, if men do reform in some things, they continue in the love and practice of other sins. This is not true Repentance ; for he that hath truly repented, is heartily troubled for all his offences against God, and resolv'd not to commit the like again ; but he that retains any lust, and allows himself in the practice of it, is not troubled that he hath offended God, but hath left his sins for some other reason. For whatever arguments and considerations

ons respecting God will move a Man to quit any one lust, ought upon the same account to prevail with him to abandon all. So that whatever trouble and sorrow a Man may pretend for his sins, there is no surer sign of an insincere Repentance, than if after this he continue in the habitual practice of any known sin.

Serm. I.

VI. The appearance and ostentation of some particular Grace and Virtue.

A Man may be mov'd by the inclination of his Nature, or upon some interest and design, to the practice of some particular Virtue. Some are tender and compassionate in their Nature, and that excites them to Charity ; others of quiet and easie dispositions, and that makes them patient and meek and peaceable ; others assume one or more virtuous qualities out of vain-glory, or to serve some other interest. The Pharisees were much in giving Alms, because this is a piece of Religion universally applauded and well spoken of ; and therefore though they omitted many

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other necessary parts of Religion, yet they were so cunning that they would not be defective in this ; not out of regard to God, but themselves and their own Reputation. For, as our Saviour observes, they did their Alms with such circumstances of vain-glory as quite blasted the glory of them. *They caus'd a trumpet to be sounded before them in the Synagogues and in the streets, that they might be seen of men, and have glory of them.*

Now though the exercise of every Grace and Virtue be materially a substantial part of Religion, yet the practice of one Virtue with the neglect of others, is a shrew'd ground of suspicion that it is not Virtue but Design, that it is not Religion but interest which prompts men to it. For if it were Religion, and done with regard to God, the very same Reason would oblige them to all other parts of their Duty as well as that.

VII. A great Zeal for some particular Party, or Opinions, or Circumstances of Religion.

This

This *Form* is frequently assumed, because men find the greatest shelter and protection under it. He that declares zealously for a Party or Opinion, and, is fierce and eager against those that oppose it, seldom fails to gain the Reputation of a Religious and Godly Man; because he hath the Vote of the whole Party, and a great number to cry him up. And if he be guilty of any miscarriage, unless it be very gross and visible, he shall never want those that will apologise for him, and be ready to vindicate him at all turns. Either they will not believe what is reported of him, but impute it to malice; or they will extenuate it, and ascribe it to human infirmity: but still they cannot but think he is a Religious Man, because he is so zealous for that which they esteem to be so considerable a part of Religion. Nay such is the horrible partiality and injustice of Parties, that a very bad Man that appears zealous for their way, shall easily gain the esteem of a Holy and a Religious Man, though he have many visible and notorious faults; though

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he be passionate and ill-natur'd, censorious and uncharitable, cruel and oppressive, sordid and covetous ; when another who quietly and without any noise and bustle minds the substantial parts of Religion, and is truly devout towards God, just and peaceable and charitable towards men ; meek and humble and patient, kind and friendly even to those that differ from him, shall hardly escape being censur'd for a lukewarm, formal, moral Man, destitute of the Grace of God and of *the power of Godliness*.

So likewise Zeal for or against indifferent Circumstances of Religion, is another *Form of Godliness* which many appear in. And commonly such persons, the more destitute they are of true Piety and Virtue, the greater stir they keep about these things, that they may seem to be something in Religion ; just like those, who being conscious to themselves that they are defective in true and useful Learning, that they may not seem to be so, are always troublesome with the shreds and ends of it.

Now

Now the indifferent Circumstances of Religion are things which no Man ought to have the face to trouble himself about, that neglects the weighty and substantial Duties of it. No Man that hath *a beam in his own eye*, ought to be concern'd for *the mote that is in his brother's eye*. Indeed he that is careful of the main parts of Religion, may and ought to be concern'd for the other in their due place, so far as the order and decency of God's Worship, and obedience to Authority, and the Peace of Christians is concern'd in them. But to place all Religion in a Zeal for or against these things, is one of the thinnest and slightest *Forms of Religion*.

VIII. Sillyness and freakishness, and either a pretended or real ignorance in the common affairs and concerns of human life.

This may seem at first hearing to be a very odd *Form of Religion*, and indeed so it is ; yet in several Religions men have appear'd in it with great applause and acceptance. Among the
Turks

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Turks Ideots and madmen are mightily reverenc'd, it being always taken for granted that they are inspir'd. And among the Papists, the most eminent of their Saints, if their Legends do not bely them, especially *St. Francis*, and *St. Dominick*, are magnified scarcely for any other reason, but for saying and doing the most silly and ridiculous things. What can be imagin'd more foolish and fanatical than *St. Francis's* stripping himself of his Cloaths and running about naked? Than his frequent preaching to the Birds, and Beasts, and Fishes? Was ever any thing more nauseously ridiculous, than his picking up the Lice which were beaten off his Cloaths, and putting them in his bosom? which is magnifi'd in him as a profound piece of humility, as if nastiness were a Christian Grace. These and many more such freaks which are related in his Life as Instances of his great sanctity, serve to no other purpose but to render Religion ridiculous to any Man of common sense. As if to be a *spiritual man* and a *mere natural*, were all one, and as if this were a good consequence, that a Man cannot chuse

chuse but be very knowing in Religion, because he is very silly in all other things; and must needs have a-bundance of Grace, because he hath no Wit. It is pity it should be so, but I am afraid it is too true, that the greatest mischiefs that have been done to the World, have been done by silly well-meaning men. Serm. I.

Lastly, Great noise and talk about Religion.

This is as empty a *Form* as any of the rest, and yet this does strangely please and satisfy a great many. If a man do but mix something of Religion with all his Discourses, and be often speaking of God and heavenly things, this passeth for a more than ordinary Character of a Religious Man. And many deceive themselves with it, they have talk'd of Religion so long, till they believe they have it.

Not but that this is a good thing, provided it be order'd with discretion and humility, and be not forc'd and affected, impertinent and troublesome.
But

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But then we must have a great care that other things be answerable. Our lives must justifie our godly talk, and our actions must give weight to our words, For nothing is more odious, than a Religious and good discourse from the mouth of a bad Man. This made our Saviour so full of indignation against the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, they were not what they appeared to be in their discourse and outward garb. *They said and did not*, therefore he compares them to *whited walls and painted Sepulchres, that were beautiful indeed without, but within were full of all uncleanness and rottenness.*

'Tis true indeed, that *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*; if Religion be within, it will appear in mens words as well as actions; this is a fire that will break out: but the best men are very modest, and make little noise, do nothing out of ostentation and to be taken notice of, and had rather *restrain from good words*, than to make an unseasonable shew of Religion.

Speech

Speech is intended to signifie the inward sense of mens minds, but it does not always do so ; men may be full of Religious talk, when there is nothing of Religion in their hearts, nothing answerable in their lives ; men may speak like Angels, and yet do like Devils.

Therefore let no man deceive himself, or think to deceive others with this appearance of Religion : for let men talk never so piously, every considerate Man knows that there is more of true Religion in one good action, than in a thousand good words.

And thus I have done with the *first* thing, *viz.* wherein a *Form of Religion* doth consist.

Secondly, Wherein *the power of Godliness* doth consist. And because it is very material to be rightly informed in this, I will reduce the several particulars to these *four* general heads.

I. A due sense of God, and suitable affections towards him.

II. A sincere and diligent use of the Means and Instruments of Religion.

III. A firm and steady Resolution of well-doing.

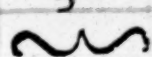
IV. As the proper and genuine effect of all these, the practice of a good life, in the several parts and instances of it.

I. A due sense of God, and suitable affections towards him. This is the Principle and Fountain of all Religion, from whence all actions of Piety and Goodness do spring.

Under this I comprehend a lively sense of God's Being ; which the Apostle tells us is fundamentally necessary to all religion, *He that cometh to God must believe that he is.* This is the great spring of all Religious Motions, and of our dependance upon him, the lively sense whereof will
make

make us humble and thankful, and teach us *to acknowledge him in all our ways*, and to refer all our Concernments to him; and of our subjection to him, which will make us obedient to his Laws, and submissive to his Pleasure; nothing being more reasonable than that he that gave us our lives, should have the entire government and disposal of them; than that he that made us what we are, should command us what we should do. In short, this comprehends Faith in God, or a readiness to assent to what he reveals, with the Fear and the Love of God, which are the great Principles of Religion.

II. A sincere and diligent use of the Means and Instruments of Religion, such as Prayer, Reading, and hearing the Word of God, and receiving the Sacraments. These are the Means which God hath appointed for the improving of us in Holiness and Goodness; and we sincerely use these Means, when we really aim at this end; when we pray, and read, and hear, and meditate on God's Word, and receive the Sacraments,
that

 that we may truly become better;
 Vol. XI. more holy and virtuous in all manner
 of Conversation; and do not rest in
 the use of these Means, as if a Man
 were a Religious and good Man, be-
 cause he Prays often, and every day
 reads the Bible, and goes to all the
 Sermons he can hear of, and takes all
 occasions to receive the Sacrament.
 The life of Religion does not consist
 in the bare use of these, but in the
 real efficacy of them upon our lives.
 It is a very good Caution which St.
John gives us, *Be not deceived, He that*
doth righteousness is righteous, even as
he is righteous, 1 John 3. 6. Men are
 apt to impose upon themselves, as if
 they could be righteous, and approve
 themselves to God, upon some other
 terms, whereas only *they that fear God,*
and work righteousness, are accepted with
him.

I do not speak this to undervalue
 the exercises of Religion, but to in-
 form men of the true nature and de-
 sign of them. Be as diligent as thou
 wilt in the exercises of Piety and
 Devotion, but be sincere in the use
 of those Means; do not satisfie thy
 self

self in the performance of those duties, unless thou find the effect of them upon thy heart and life, always remembering that *not the hearers of the Word, but the doers of it are blessed*; that *the prayer, and all the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

III. A firm and steady resolution of well-doing. This is the result of a true and sincere Repentance, and the great principle of a new life; and if it be firm and stedfast, it will derive its influence into all our actions: but if it be wavering and inconstant, it is only the occasion of a religious mood and fit, but not the principle of a religious state. Therefore it concerns us to strengthen this principle, and to be true to it, when we have once taken it up; for when ever we quit it, we break loose from God and Religion at once, and cast our selves back into a much more dangerous state than we were in before.

There is no doubt, but that the Devil and our own corrupt hearts will make many assaults upon such a resolution,

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lution, and raise all their batteries against it, because it is our main fort, and the great security of our Souls, and so long as we maintain that, we are safe; and therefore it had need be a mighty Resolution that is able to stand out against such opposition.

But what are *we* that we should take up such a Resolution, and what is our strength? We are weak and *unstedfast as water, reeds shaken with the wind*; we are *not sufficient of our selves, as of our selves, for any thing that is good*; the way of Man is not in himself, nor is it in Man that walks to direct his steps: but we have a greater strength than our own to rely upon, and greater than that of any adverse power that can set it self against us; we have God on our side, and the assistance of his Grace to back and fortifie these holy Resolutions; so that we have no reason to despair of success and victory, if we be not wanting to our selves; for *God's Grace is sufficient for us*; greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World.

IV. And lastly, Which is the proper
and

and genuine effect of all these, the practice of a holy and virtuous life in all the parts and instances of it. And unless this effect be produced, we want the surest evidence of the former: for, it is not credible, that that Man hath a due sense of God, and pious affections towards him, or does sincerely exercise himself in the duties of Religion, or is firmly resolved in well-doing, who does not shew forth the effects of all this in a good Conversation. Thus St. James reasons, Chap. 3. 13. *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge amongst you? that is instructed in the christian knowledge, in the heavenly wisdom; let him shew forth out of a good Conversation his Works.*

So that herein *the power of godliness* doth visibly appear, in the course of a good life; and 'tis the very design of the Apostle in this Chapter to declare this to us, as will appear to any one that considers the description here given of those Persons, who under a *shew of Religion denied the power of it*; they were such as notwithstanding all their pretences to godliness, allowed themselves

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~ selves in several Vices, and Lusts, and Passions, and were destitute of the Virtues of a good life, they were selfish, and covetous, and vain-glorious, and proud, evil-speakers, disobedient to Parents, unthankful to their Benefactors, filthy and impure, treacherous, heady, conceited, sensual and voluptuous; so that whatever appearance of godliness they made; they were almost as bad as could be imagined; there is hardly a fuller Catalogue of sins to be met with in the Bible: besides that all these Vices are such as are plain and evident in the lives of Men.

So that upon the whole matter, it is very clear wherein the Apostle mainly places *the Power of Godliness*, namely, in the real Effects of Religion, such as are the mortifying our lusts, and subduing of our passions, the government of our tongues, and the several virtues of a good life.

I. In the mortifying of our lusts, the lusts of intemperance and uncleanness, covetousness, and ambition. He that is a Slave to any of these, his Religion

Religion is but a *form*, how glorious a shew soever it may make. *Fleshly lusts war against the Soul*, and will finally ruin it. Covetousness and Pride are enmity to God. *God resists the proud afar off, and the covetous man the Lord abhors.*

2. In the subduing of our passions, Wrath, Hatred, Malice, Envy and Revenge. They are the very nature and properties of the Devil, and Dispositions as contrary to God, as light is to darkness; therefore whoever allows himself in these, whatever pretences he makes to Religion, is really a bad man. This St. John tells us is a plain case, 1 John 3. 10. *Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother.* Jam. 3. 13, 14. *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lye not against the truth,* that is, do not pretend to be Religious; *this Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*

3. In the government of our tongues. This is a great Effect of Religion, to keep our tongues from speaking Evil,
D 3 from

The Power of Godliness, consisting

from backbiting, and slandering, and censuring, and reviling, from prophane swearing and cursing, lewd and filthy talking. When mens tongues run out into these disorders, it is a sign that they are not under the Government of Religion, and that the fear of God hath not seized upon their hearts; for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* So St. James tells us, *Chap. 1. 26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart; this man's religion is vain.* And on the contrary, it is a good sign that Religion hath some power over men, when it restrains them in this kind. So the same Apostle tells us, *Chap. 3. 2. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.*

4. In the several Virtues of a good life, in opposition to these and all other Vices; such as are Truth and Justice, Humility and Meekness, Patience and Contentedness with our condition, Peaceableness and Charity to those that are in want and necessity, a readiness to forgive our enemies, and an universal love and kindness

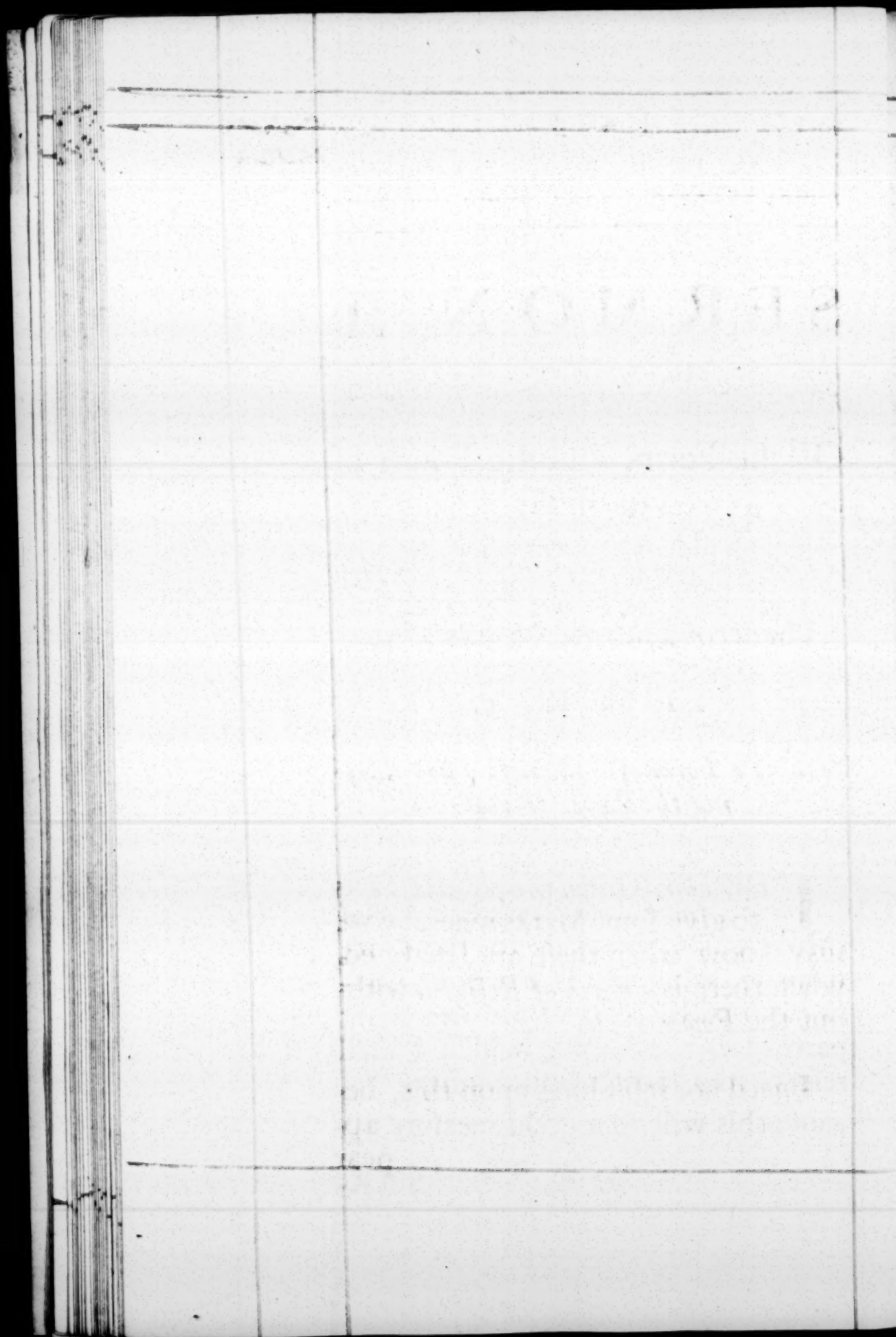
in the governing our Tongues and Lives.

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Serm. I.

kindness to all men. I have not time to recommend these particularly to you, the Scripture does it frequently and fully, telling us that these are *the will of God*, and the *divine nature*, the *new creature*, pure *Religion and undefiled*, the *wisdom that is from above*, the *fruits of the Spirit*, the proper and genuine Effects of true Piety, the sensible and substantial Evidences of our love to God, the things wherein *the Kingdom of God consists*, and that *he that in these things serveth Christ, is accepted of God, and approved of men*; but he that neglects these, whatever *Form of Godliness* he puts on, is a denier of the power of it. *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil, He that doth not righteousness is not of God.*

Thus I have done with the *second* thing I propounded to speak to, namely, wherein *the Power of Godliness* consists. There are *two* other particulars remaining, which I shall reserve to a farther opportunity.



SERMON II.

Of the Form, and the Power of
Godliness.

The second Sermon on this Text.

2 TIM. III. 5.

*Having a Form of Godliness ; but deny-
ing the Power thereof.*

THE *Third* thing propounded was
to give some Marks whereby we
may know when these are separated,
when there is a *Form of Religion* with-
out the *Power of it*.

I need not insist long upon this, be-
cause this will in a good measure ap-
pear .

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pear by the account I have given of these two severally, of *the Form of Religion*, and of the *Power of it*; for he that considers wherein each of these consists, will easily judge when they are separated. But yet, that we may be sure not to mistake in a matter of so great concernment, I will instance in *two* or *three* gross and palpable Characters of this, and they are so comprehensive as to contain most of the rest.

I. He hath only a *Form of Godliness*, who minds merely the external part of Religion, without any inward sense of it.

II. He that useth only the Means of Religion, without regard to the End and Effect of it.

III. He that is grossly and knowingly defective in the Practice of any part of it.

I. He hath only a *Form of Godliness*, who minds merely the external part of Religion, without any inward sense of it. He that worships and serves

Separated from its Power.

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Serm. 2.

serves God outwardly, but hath no inward reverence and esteem for him, who cares not, so the work be done, and the duty performed, with what heart and affection he does it. This is a mere Carcass of Religion, which is so far from being pleasing to God, that it is intolerably offensive to him; for tho' it be outwardly an honour done to God, yet really and in truth it is a contempt of him.

And yet it is to be feared, that this is a Religion which many in the World chuse and content themselves with. They can serve God an hour together, and mention his Name an hundred times, without ever thinking of him, or being affected with the business they are about: nay which is worse, this is a Religion which a great part of the World use, and cannot help it, I mean all those who serve God in an unknown tongue. For how is it possible their minds and hearts can be concerned in a Service they do not understand? They may possibly have a devout mind in general; but they cannot exercise any acts of Devotion in the particular service they

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they are Engaged in. The best of men are apt enough to let their thoughts swerve, and go astray from God when they are worshipping of him, tho' they understand the service they are about ; but when they do not understand, it is impossible their minds and thoughts should go along with it, and be concerned in what is done. This is properly and in the strict sense of the Word *μὴ ῥημάτων εὐσεβείας* an image of Religion and Devotion, without any life or sense. And if to have our Bodies put in a devout posture, to move our Hands, and Lips, and Eyes, without understanding the service we offer to God, may be accounted worshipping of him, this is a service that may be performed by Puppets as well as men. *God is a spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. In spirit and in truth*, in opposition to a mere bodily service, and external shew of Devotion. God who is a Spirit, must be worship'd with our Spirits. He expects from reasonable Creatures a reasonable service, and that service only is reasonable, which is dictated by our understandings, and accompanied with our hearts and affections: and

and to worship him otherwise, is to offer a Sacrifice without a heart, it is *to offer the lame and the blind in sacrifice*, which would be an affront *to our governour*, much more *to the great King of the world*. Whatever we do in the Service of God, we must *do it heartily as to the Lord*, because he is *the searcher of hearts*, and *all things are open, and naked to the eyes of him, with whom we have to do*.

II. He hath only *a Form of Godliness*, that useth only the Means of Religion, without regard to the End and Effect of them. A Man may exercise his understanding in the Service of God, and his heart may be touched and his affections moved in Prayer, and at the hearing of God's Word, and the receiving of the Sacrament, and yet this may be but *a Form of Religion*, if it go no farther. If we do not forsake those sins we confess to God, and daily beg the pardon of; if we do not truly and heartily endeavour that we may live godly and righteous and sober lives, as well as pray that we may do so; if the Counsels and Directions of God's Word

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Word have not an influence upon our lives ; if we be not awed by the threatnings of it to leave our sins, and encouraged by the promises of it *to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God* ; we use the Means of Religion to no purpose, and we discredit the Institutions of God, because we make no proficiency under them. We are jnst like the Disciples of those formal Professors of Religion, whom the Apostle describes after the Text, *who are ever learning : but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* It seems they used the Means of Instruction, and continued to use them, *they were ever learning* ; but all this while they were under the dominion of sin, and the power of their lusts ; *they were laden with sin, and led away with divers lusts*, and so they never attain'd to that which the Apostle calls *the knowledge of the truth*, that is, such a knowledge of the Doctrine of Christ, as is accompanied with a suitable practice, according to that of our Saviour, *Joh. 8. 31. If ye continue in my word, that is, if ye practise my Doctrine, then are ye my disciples indeed,*

indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Then men come to the knowledge of the truth, when it frees them from the slavery of sin. If our knowledge have not this effect, it signifies nothing, and does not deserve the name of knowledge, because we know nothing in Religion as we ought to know. 1 John 2. 2, 3. speaking of the knowledge of Christ, Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith he knows him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a lyar, and the truth is not in him.

Serm. 2.

III. He hath only a *Form of Religion*, who is grossly and knowingly defective in the practice of any part of it. And this sort of Persons are those, whom the Apostle particularly intended here in the Text. For such were they whom he describes by this Character, that *they had a Form of Godliness, but denied the power of it.* Under the garb of Religion which they had put on, they were grossly faulty in their lives and practice, and mainly defective in many of the essential duties of Christianity; they were

selfish

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selfish and covetous, vain-glorious and despisers of others, calumniators and slanderers, undutiful to their Superiours, and unthankful to those that had obliged them, fierce and ill-natur'd, treacherous and false to their word, persecutors of those that were good, filthy and sensual; not that every one of them had all these Vices, they are so many and gross, that no cloak of Religion could have cover'd them; but the Apostle means that among those that made an empty Profession of Religion, these Vices were visible, some of them in one, and some in another. And the living in any one of these, or any other of the like nature, is inconsistent with Christianity. The power of Religion appears chiefly in the subduing of these Lusts, and in the exercise and practice of those Graces and Virtues which are contrary to these. Here the very heart and life of Religion lies, and these are the Veins in which it runs; and if there be a failure in any of these main Virtues of a Christian life, it is a plain case, that we are destitute of *the Power of Religion*, and do only make a vain and empty shew of it.

St.

St. James instanceth as one would think, in none of the grossest and most considerable of these, the government of our tongue, and yet he peremptorily determines, that the want of this Virtue is enough to destroy all a Man's other pretences to Religion, Chap. 1. 26. *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceives his own heart; this man's Religion is vain.*

So that by the practice or neglect of these main Virtues of a good life, every man may examine and judge himself. This is the Rule which our Saviour gives to try the Religion of men by, *Matth. 7. 16, 17. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* The force of which reasoning is this, that every tree bringeth forth fruit according to its nature, and by the kind and equality of the fruit you
E may

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may certainly know what the tree is. So by the good or bad actions of mens lives, you may know by what principle they are govern'd, whether the fear of God, or the love of sin bear sway in them; the course of their lives will discover the bent and inclination of their minds, whatever shew and profession they may make to the contrary. *By their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, (there is some profession of Religion) shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven; (there is the Power of it.)*

I would by no means encourage men to be over censorious toward others, there is too much of that Spirit already in the world: but it is not amiss that men should be strict and severe toward themselves. And I would to God men would bring themselves to this test, and examine the truth and sincerity of their Religion, not by the Leaves of an outward profession, but by the Fruits it produceth in their lives. Every Man that will
but

but take the pains to look into himself, and to observe his own actions, may by comparing the temper of his mind, and the general course of his life and practice, with the Rules and Precepts of Religion, easily discern what Power and Efficacy Religion hath on him. A Man may as certainly know himself, and make as sure a judgment of his state and condition toward God this way, *as a tree is known by its fruit.* Therefore let us not flatter our selves: for if we indulge any lust, or irregular passion in our Souls, and do not endeavour to mortifie and subdue it; if we allow our selves in any vicious practice in our lives; we do but deceive our selves with an opinion of our Godliness, and whatever *shew* and *appearance* we may make of Religion, we are certainly destitute of *the Power* of it. True Religion and Godliness is an uniform Principle, which inclines a Man to all Holiness and Goodness, and does byass him against all known sin and wickedness. All the Motives and Arguments of Religion, and all Considerations of Piety are levell'd against all sin, and tend to engage men

to universal holiness of life. *Bonum constat ex integris causis : sed malum ex quolibet defectu.* The practice of any one Vice is enough to render a Man a bad Man : but there must be the concurrence of all the parts of Religion and Virtue, to make a Man good.

I proceed to the *Fourth* thing I propounded, which was to shew, that *a Form of godliness* without *the Power of it*, is insignificant to all the great Ends and Purposes of Religion. The great Ends that Men can reasonably propound to themselves in being religious, are these *three*.

I. The Pleasing of God.

II. The Peace and Tranquillity of our own minds.

III. The saving of our Souls. Now *a Form of Godliness* without *the Power of it*, is unavailable to all these purposes.

I. To the pleasing of God. External Devotion, and exercising our selves

insignificant to the pleasing of God.

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Serm. 2,

selves in the Means and Instruments of Religion, and the Profession of a right Belief, or any other *Form* of Religion whatsoever, do not recommend any Man to the Divine favour and acceptance,* without the real Effects of Religion in a good life : nay, so far is it from this, that all *Forms* of Religion, destitute of *the Life and Power* of it, are extremely odious and offensive to him. Devotion in Prayer without a Holy life, is but a rude and troublesome noise in the ears of the Almighty. *The prayer of the wicked* is so far from being accepted, that it is *an abomination to him*. He does not love to be invoked by unhallowed mouths, and to be praised by the workers of iniquity. Flattery is hateful to a wise Man, much more to the infinitely wise God. He cannot endure that men should lift up *eyes* to him *that are full of adultery, and hands fill'd with violence and oppression, and tread his courts with feet ready to shed blood*. It is an affront to God to be worshipped by evil-doers, and to see men diligent in reading his Word, and attending to his Law, who break it every day. *Unto the wicked God*

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saith,

saith, What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest to be reformed, and castest my words behind thy back? What God says of the Sacrifices of the Jews, offered to him by a sinful people laden with iniquity, may be applied to the worship of Christians who live wicked and abominable lives, Isa. I. 11, 12, &c. To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt-offerings of Rams, and the fat of fed Beasts, and I delight not in the blood of Bulls, or of Lambs, or of He-goats. When ye came to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my Courts! Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination unto me: the new Moons, and Sabbaths, and the calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meetings. Your new Moons, and your appointed feasts my Soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine Eyes from you: yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from

from before mine Eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well. This is that which God expects from us, the amendment and reformation of our lives, and without this all our religious addressees to him are nauseous and abominable. Cod does hardly any where in Scripture express so great a detestation of the greatest sins, as he does of the devotion of wicked men. I will but bring one text more to this purpose, *Isa. 66. 3. He that killeth an Ox is, as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offer'd Swines blood: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an Idol.* What is the reason of all these severe expressions? Because they were *the Sacrifices of the wicked, of those who had chosen their own ways, and whose Soul delighted in their abominations*; they worship'd God according to *his* will, but liv'd according to *their own*, and therefore they were to him no better than an Assembly of murderers, and a Church of Idolatrous Worshipers: for this is false Worship, to offer Sacrifices to God, and to devote our selves to the service of our Lusts.

II. Another End of Religion is the Peace and Tranquillity of our own minds. And this is not to be attained upon true and lasting grounds, by any *Form* of Religion without the *Power* of it. Men may delude themselves with some false peace, and make a hard shift to stop the loud and vehement clamours of their Conscience; but the guilt of any vicious course of life will frequently recoil upon them, to disturb and interrupt their peace, and to put out their false joy; their Consciences will ever and anon give them many secret girds and lashes. For no man can knowingly live in the practice of any sin, but he must be guilty to himself; and whoever is guilty, hath received a secret sting into his heart, which is never to be taken out but by Repentance, and a thorough Reformation. God hath said it, and I doubt not but every sinner finds it true, *There is no Peace to the Wicked.* Especially when such a man is seized upon by sickness, and approaches in his thoughts nearer to Eternity, then his drowlie Conscience awakes like a Lion out of sleep, full of rage and fierceness,

insignificant to the peace of our minds.

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fierceness, and all his false peace and comfort vanisheth. *For what is the hope of the Hypocrite when God comes to take away his Soul? It is, as Job elegantly expresseth it, like the Spider's Web, artificially wrought, but miserably weak, it cannot endure no stress, upon the least touch it breaks and vanisheth.*

Serm.2.

And this is no small disadvantage which a Man that hath only *the Form of Religion* lyes under, that in effect he loseth all the pleasure and satisfaction of Religion; or if he fancy any hope or comfort to himself, it is built upon a false foundation, which when it is try'd will endure no shock. This is the comparison our Saviour useth in this very case, *Matth. 7. 26, 27. Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not (here is a Form of Godliness without the Power of it) shall be likened to a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. But real and substantial Religion is like a house*

A Form of Godliness, without the Power,
a house built on a rock, which no tem-
 pest can overthrow. *Righteousness*
saith Solomon, Prov. 10. 25. is an e-
verlasting foundation ; it is a continu-
 al spring of joy and peace. There is
 a certain unspeakable contentment
 and delight arising from a good
 Conscience, and from the sincere dis-
 charge of our duty, which a Hypo-
 crite is a stranger to, and is never ad-
 mitted to the taste of. Now what
 an uncomfortable thing is this, for a
 man to take the pains to seem to be
 religious, and yet to lose the real
 pleasure of Religion !

III. The great End of all, of being
 religious, is the saving of our Souls.
 And this End a meer *Form of Religion*
 will certainly miss of. No external
 garb of Religion will gain a man ad-
 mission into Heaven ; there is no get-
 ting in there in masquerade, no pray-
 ers will then avail, tho' never so fer-
 vent and importunate. *Many shall say*
in that day, Lord, Lord, open unto us ;
and yet he will bid them depart from
him. Tho' we had heard Christ him-
 self preach, and had received the
 blessed Sacrament with him, yet this
 will

insignificant to the saving our Souls.

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will not avail. So our Saviour tells us, *Luke 13. 26.* Then shall they begin to say, *We have eaten and drunken in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets; and yet he will say unto them, I know not whence you are. 'Tis not a pretence to inspiration, no, tho' it were justified by miraculous gifts, that will then stand us in stead. Many shall say in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wondrous works? and yet these shall be rejected. Why, what should be the reason of all this severity? Our Saviour gives us a plain account of it; because they were workers of iniquity. Under all these several Masks of Religion, they were wicked in their lives.*

Serm. 2.

'Tis not an Orthodox Faith, and the belief of all the Articles of Christianity, that will save a man, without the works of a good life, Jam. 2. 14. What doth it profit a man, my Brethren, tho' a Man say that he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him? Thou believest there is one God; thou dost well; the devils believe this too, but they

they are not so vain as to hope to be saved by this Faith ; no, they know the contrary, and that makes them fear and tremble. *Know then, O vain man, that faith without works is dead. Thou believest in one Lord Jesus Christ, that came down from Heaven to save us, that was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and became Man that he might bring us to God ; that suffered and died for our sins, and rose again for our Justification, and is ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence he shall come again at the end of the World, to judge the quick and the dead ; thou dost well to believe this : but if thou do not live accordingly, what will become of thee, when, he Son of God shall come to judge the World ? Then the great Enquiry will be, how we have lived ? what good we have done ? So our Saviour represents the Proceedings of that great day. I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not : therefore depart ye cursed into everlasting fire. So that it seems here the*
business

insignificant to the saving our Souls.

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Serm.2.

business will stick, upon the good or bad actions of mens lives, and accordingly Sentence shall be pronounced upon them. For God will render to every man according to his works ; to them that by patient continuance in well-doing seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality ; Eternal Life : but to those that obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness ; Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon every soul of Man that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile : but Glory and Honour, and Peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile : for not the bearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified. Still you see that 'tis to the patient continuance in well-doing, to the obeying of the truth, to the working of righteousness, that eternal life is promised : and the wrath of God is threatned to them that obey unrighteousness, to every Soul of Man that doth evil. To the Jew first, Why so? Because he had great advantage of coming to the knowledge of the truth, which is so much the greater aggravation of his wicked life, and makes his Sentence so much the heavier.

Indeed

Indeed it shall be to men at the day of Judgment likewise according to their Faith, in a certain sense, that is, according to the Doctrine of the Gospel which they profess to believe, according to what our Saviour and his Apostles have taught, that *the workers of iniquity shall depart from him; that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; and if we live after the flesh we shall die; that no whoremonger, nor adulterer, nor covetous, nor unrighteous person, shall have any inheritance in the Kingdom of God, and of Christ.* This we profess to believe, and according to these declarations God will proceed with men at the great day. And he that believes this, and yet goes on in any impiety and wickedness of life, tho' his Faith will not justify him, yet God will justify his Faith, and make it good, when *he shall judge the world in righteousness.*

Thus you see plainly, that *a Form of Godliness without the Power*, is insignificant to all the great Ends and Purposes of Religion; nay, he that takes up in *a Form*, does not only lose the

insignificant to the saving our Souls. 63
the Advantages of Religion ; but he hath *two* great Disadvantages by it. *Serm.2.*

I. He hath the trouble of making a shew of Religion, without the real benefit of it.

II. He incurs a heavier Sentence upon this very account.

But these with the Application I shall refer to the next opportunity.

S E R M.

1871

Nov
1871

SEEKING

Of the Lord, and the Power of
Godliness

The third sermon on the text

1 Tim. III. 2

When a man of the household of God
has the following qualities

Come now to know, that in
this letter upon this subject
I have, without any design
to only tell all the good things
which are of benefit to the
soul of the Christian.

S E R M O N III.

Of the Form, and the Power of
Godliness.

The third Sermon on this Text.

2 TIM. III. 5.

*Having a Form of Godliness ; but deny-
ing the Power thereof.*

I Come now to shew, that he
that takes upon him a *Form of
Religion*, without *the Power of it*, doth
not only lose all the considerable Ad-
vantages of Religion, but he hath
two great Disadvantages by it.

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I. He hath the trouble of making a shew and appearance of Religion, without the real benefit of it.

II. He incurs a heavier sentence upon this account, that he hath a *Form of Religion*, and yet is destitute of *the Power of it*.

I. He hath the trouble of making a shew and appearance of Religion, without the real benefits of it. And 'tis no small trouble to personate and act a part well, it requires great art and attention, great guard and caution. That which men are prompted to by an inward principle, is natural and easie, it is done with pleasure and delight; but whatever is artificial and counterfeit, is stiff and forc'd. *Nemo fictam personam diu sustinere potest*, no man can dissemble always, one time or other he will be surpris'd and forget himself, and let his Mask fall. A Form of Religion is a drie unpleasant thing, and a continual burden to him that assumes it, and the more outwardly strict and ho-
ly

ly he is, he is the more inwardly guilty ; his Conscience never stings and galls him more, than when he is playing the hypocrite with God and men : whereas a truly good Man, when he employs himself in acts of Religion, or Justice, or Charity, he doth it naturally, and hath a mighty satisfaction of mind in the doing of it, and if he were permitted to make his own choice, he would not do otherwise ; but a hypocrite puts a force upon himself all the while, and acts against his Nature and Inclinations, every thing he does in Religion goes against the grain, and because it is unnatural must be uneasy ; his outward conversation and demeanour is set, and in a Frame, he does not move as he *would* but as he *must*, and the secret propensions of his Nature are under a continual restraint.

He hath indeed one advantage by his artificial garb, that he can more securely over-reach and defraud others by his shew of Godliness, while men are not aware of his dissimulation. But this commonly does not last long, and only serves a Man for a

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few turns ; and when 'tis discover'd the Man is lost, and no body will trust him. But suppose he could serve himself of Religion this way for some considerable time, where is the advantage? It amounts to no more than this, that the man hath the opportunity of being a greater sinner, of making himself more miserable, and *treasuring up to himself more wrath against the day of wrath.* So that he pays dear for all this in the end and issue, as well as in the way. He spends many a tedious hour in the service of God, and the exercise of Religion ; more it may be than many do, who save their Souls, and get to Heaven. For as to the external part of Religion, a hypocrite must do all that which a truly religious Man does ; he must frequent the Church, and make as much shew of Devotion as the best ; nay, it may be he prays more, and fasts oftner, and is more busie, and keeps a greater stir in the outward part of Religion, than the sincere Christian ; for being conscious to himself of his own hollowness and insincerity in Religion, he thinks him-

himself obliged outwardly to over-act it in unseasonable and superstitious observances, and in all other arts of affected Devotion; and when he goes abroad into the World, he is forced to lay great restraints upon himself, and to be continually gathering his Cloak about him, as being afraid lest any body should spie what is under it. So much more troublesome it is for any Man to seem to be Religious, than to be so indeed.

II. A mere *Form of Religion* does upon some accounts bring a Man under a heavier Sentence, than if he were openly prophane and irreligious. He that makes a shew of Religion, flatters God, but all the while acts and designs against him: whereas the prophane Man deals plainly, and tho' he be a monstrous and unnatural Rebel, yet he is a fair and open Enemy; and *the kisses of a false friend* are more hateful, than *the wounds of an open enemy*. Upon this account it is that our Saviour denounceth so many severe woes against the Scribes and Pharisees, because they were wicked under a shew of Religion.

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Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites ; and when he would set forth the severity of the Lord against the evil Servant, Matth. 24. 51. He expresseth it thus, He shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the Hypocrites ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. As if the punishment of Hypocrites, were the rule and standard of the severest punishment. He shall appoint him his portion with the Hypocrites.

I will not deny but that a prophane Man is a worse example to the world, and may do more mischief upon that account : but the Hypocrite is more mischievous to himself, and of the two more odious to God, and sometimes does more prejudice to Religion by undermining it, than the other does by all his open assaults and batteries. God cannot endure to be affronted : but he hates to be mocked. So that upon this account, it is like to go harder with the formal Professors of Religion, than with the open Contemners of it.

And

And thus I have done with the *four* things I propounded to speak to from these words; wherein a *Form of Godliness* does consist; wherein *the Power of it* lies; by what Marks and Characters we may know when these are separated; and that a *Form of Religion* without *the Power of it*, is insignificant to all the great Ends and Purposes of Religion; and not only so, but it is greatly to mens disadvantage to assume a *Form of Godliness*, if they be destitute of *the Power of it*.

All that now remains, is to draw some Inferences from this discourse by way of application; and they shall be these *three*.

First, To take heed of mistaking *the Form of Religion*, for *the Power of it*.

Secondly, To take heed of being captivated and seduced by those who have only a *Form of Godliness*.

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Thirdly, To perswade men to mind the Life, and Power, and Substance of Religion.

First, to take heed of mistaking the Form of Religion, for the Power of it. The Papists have almost confined the words Religion and Religious to Cloisters and Monks; and they make a religious life to consist in Masses and Ave-Maries, and Pater-Nosters, in the observation of canonical hours, and the distinctions of Meats and Habits, in course Cloaths, and a dissembled Poverty, and several bodily rigours and severities. As if to make a Man a religious and good Man, it were necessary that he should be drest fantastically, and in a great many indifferent things be different from other men. Nay, so far doth this Superstition prevail, that a great many think that they should hardly get to Heaven without it, or that it will be very much for their advantage, if they be buried in the habit of a religious Man. As if to be put in a Monk's Coul, would give a Man the start of other People at the Resurrection. But what Reason

Reason is there that the name and Title of *Religion* should be appropriated to these usages? Does the Scripture any where constitute Religion in these things, or confine it to them? Are not these voluntary things, which God ties no Man to? Whence then come they to swallow up the Name of *Religion*, and to engross it to themselves, as if they were the very Life and Soul of Christianity; when the great Author of our Religion *Jesus Christ*, and his blessed Apostles, never spake one word of them? What an abuse of Language is this, to confine the Name of *Religion* to that which is not so much as any part of it!

But the Church of *Rome* is not alone guilty of this; among our selves it is very ordinary to mistake *the Form of Godliness* for *the Power*, tho' the mistake is not so gross, as in those particulars I have mentioned. How many are there, who talk as if *the Power of Godliness* consisted in nothing else but a daily task of Devotion, in frequent hearing of Sermons, and a strict observation of the Lord's day. These
are

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are very good things ; but they are but a *Form of Godliness*, and may be, and often are without *the Power of it* ; they are but *the Means and Instruments* of Religion, but not the great *End and Design* of it ; *that* consists in the renewing of our Natures, and the Reformation of our Lives ; in Righteousness and true Holiness ; in mortifying the flesh with the affections and lusts of it, such as are adultery, fornication, hatred, variance, wrath, sedition, envying, murder, drunkenness : for they which do such things, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God ; and in the fruits of the Spirit, such as are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance, as the Apostle reckons them up, Gal. 5. 22. These are real and sensible Effects of Religion ; and the Means of Religion, if they be sincerely used, do all tend to the begetting and increasing of these in us. So that it is a gross mistake to talk of *the Power of Religion* without these. Whoever is destitute of these, whatever attainments in Religion he may pretend to, is got no farther than a *Form of Godliness*,
he

he is is not yet under *the Power of it.* 
This is the *first.* Sermon 3.

Secondly, Let us be cautioned against being captivated and seduced by those, who have only *a Form of Godliness.* This is the Apostle's exhortation here in the Text, *From such turn away: for of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women.* To the same purpose is our Saviour's caution, *Matth. 7. 15, 16. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* And that we may know how to avoid them, our Saviour bids us to observe their lives, *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* He does not bid us examine their opinions, and try their pretences to inspiration; that is a thing many times above the capacity of the ordinary sort of men; but their lives and actions are open to every Man's view; and tho' it is possible men may counterfeit even in this, yet they seldom do it so exactly, as not to betray themselves sometime or other; however this of all other is the easiest and

easiest and surest rule. *By their fruits ye shall know them.*

Therefore if any Man pretend to any new discoveries in Religion, beyond what is plainly revealed in Scripture, tho' he appear in never so sanctimonious a garb, be not moved with this. For *the Power of Religion* does not consist in any thing now to be discovered; but in those things which are clearly contained in the Word of God, in the Precepts and Directions, and in the Motives and Arguments to a good Life; and whoever lives according to these, is in the best way to Heaven that any Man can put himself into; and he need not trouble himself about those new Lights and Opinions, which in every age appear like Comets, and glare awhile, and draw People to gaze upon them, and then vanish. And none are so much to be suspected of a *Form of Religion* as those who make frequent changes in it, and wander from one Party and Opinion to another. An outward Form and Shape is easily changed, it is that which a Man shifts and puts off at pleasure.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, To persuade men to mind the Power, and Life, and Substance of Religion. It was the commendation of *Socrates*, the best of Philosophers, that he did *Philosophiam de cælo deducere*, bring down Philosophy from heaven to earth, that is, from Contemplation to Practice, and from being an art of talking and disputing to be an art of living. This I desire may be the aim of all my Discourses, to instruct men in Religion in order to the Practice of it, to teach men to know God, in St. *John's* sense, 1 *John* 2, 3. Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. This is the great end and scope, to which all discourses of Religion ought to be levell'd. It was a good saying of *Pacuvius*, *Ego odi homines ignava opera, & Philosophia sententia*, I hate men that are unactive in their lives, and Philosophers in their opinions. Christianity is the best Philosophy, and the most perfect institution of life that ever the World was acquainted withal; and therefore it

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is much more odious to see men Christians in their Profession, and faulty and vicious in their lives; because the very design of the Christian Religion is to give men a perfect and plain Law and Rule of life, and to enforce this Law by the most powerful and prevailing Arguments. So that as Tully says concerning the Philosopher who liv'd but a bad life, that he was utterly inexcusable, *Quod in eo cuius magister esse vult labitur, artem vitæ professus, delinquit in vita*, Because he fail'd in that wherein he pretended to be a master, and while he professed to have an art of living better than other men, he offended and miscarried in his life: all defects in the Practice, and in the Virtues of a good life, may with much more reason and justice be upbraided to Christians, to those who have learned Christ, who have heard him and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; to those who are blest with the clearest and most perfect Revelation which ever God made to the World, the holiest and most reasonable Religion, which furnisheth us with the best Counsels and Directions,

ons, the most prevalent Motives and Arguments, and the greatest Helps and Advantages to a good life ; a Religion plain and simple, that hath less of outward form and pomp, and more of substance and reality, than any Religion that ever was known in the World. Serm. 3.

What a sad thing is it, that a Religion so wholly fitted and calculated to the design and purpose of a good life, armed with such powerful Considerations to engage men thereto, should yet have so little force and power upon the lives of Men, as we see it generally to have ! as if *the Grace of God had never appeared to men, to teach them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World.*

There was hardly ever any Age, wherein *the Form of Religion* did more abound, and there were greater variety in them : and it is to be feared that there was never less of *the Power and Efficacy* of it.

I will instance in two great defects in the Lives and Practice of Christians, which are visible to every one, but are sad indications how little *the Power of Religion* prevails among men ; I mean the want of common honesty and integrity among men, and the want of peace and love ; the first of which, is the great Virtue of civil Conversation, and the other the great Bond both of Civil and Ecclesiastical Societies. These are two great Duties of Religion frequently mention'd, and strictly charged upon the Consciences of men in Scripture : and yet how rare is the practice of them in the lives of Christians ? These are *two* main defects in Religion, and a plain demonstration of *a Form of Religion*, without *the Power of it*.

1. The want of common honesty and integrity among Men. So indeed it used to be called, *common honesty* : but it grows so rare now, that it is like to lose that name. *Righteousness, Truth and Faithfulness* are almost failed from among the Children of Men ; all ranks of men have corrupted themselves in this kind ; this is grown almost

most an universal depravation, there is hardly any trade, or profession which hath not something of knavery and falshood woven into the very Mystery of it, and is become almost a necessary part of it. Where is the generous honesty and uprightness which did heretofore possess the spirits of men, and which is an inseparable companion of true Courage? But we are now passing apace into foreign manners and vices, and any Form of Religion will serve, when Justice and Integrity are gone.

Serm. 3.

2. The want of Peace and Love. How full of factions and divisions are we? and these managed with all imaginable heat and animosity toward one another; as if the badge of Christianity were changed, and our Saviour had said, *Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye hate one another.*

All the differences among Christians, of what denomination soever,
G are

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are sadly to be lamented ; but I almost despair as to the difference between us and the Church of Rome, because the Reconciliation is impossible , unless they renounce their Principles ? they cannot come over to us, because they think they are infallible ; and we cannot pass over to them, because we know they are deceived. So that there is a great gulf between us and them. We must not only renounce the Scriptures, but our Reason and our Senses to be of their mind. We cannot communicate with them in the Sacrament, because they have taken away one half of it, which is as plainly instituted and commanded , as the other part which is left. We cannot Worship the Virgin Mary, and the Saints, much less their images, because it is wtitten, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God , and him only shalt thou serve. Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth ; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor wor-*
ship

ship them; for I the Lord thy God Serm. 3.
am a jealous God. In short, several of their Articles of Faith are such, as no credulity can swallow; and several parts of their Worship are such, as no Piety can join with.

But this we bewail, that those who agree in the same essentials of Faith and Worship, should be so forward to divide and separate from one another, merely upon Forms of Government, and Circumstances of Worship. What can justify the breach of Communion and Peace upon such terms? Either Church Government is of Divine Right, or it is not. If it be, Why do not men submit to the Form which is establish'd by Authority? If it be not, What kind of Government can contend for that right, with any equality of advantage, against that which cannot be denied to have almost universally obtained in most ages and parts of the Christian World?

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As for the Circumstances of worship, there is scarce any Man hath the face to contend, that any of those used in our Church are clearly condemned by the Word of God; and what else can make them unlawful? One of the chief causes of separation, is a *Form of Prayer*; the lawfulness of which our Saviour hath abundantly justified, and I do not think was ever questioned by any Writer in the Christian Church, for near upon sixteen hundred years; and is it worth while to break the peace of the Church, and violate one of the greatest Precepts of Christianity, upon little and slight pretences of unlawfulness, and doubtful reasons of convenience and expedience; and about such things as are no more reasonable grounds of quarrels among Christians, than the differences of mens stature and faces, would be a just ground for Mankind to make War upon one another?

Where is *the Power of Religion*,
when

when the Peace and Unity of Christians is violated upon these terms? *Serm. 3.*
It is a sign that the life and substance of Religion is little regarded by us, when men can afford to imploy so much zeal about these things.

And that men may be effectually perswaded to mind the substance of Religion more, let me desire them to imprint these *three* considerations upon their minds.

I. That the parts of Religion are subordinate to one another, and are to be minded each in their due place. *The Means* of Religion are less worth than *the End*, and therefore deserve our regard chiefly in order to that. *The Circumstances* of Religion are less considerable, than *the Means* and *Instruments* of it, and therefore are to be subordinated to them. *Faith* is in order to *the Practice of a good life*, and signifies nothing, unless it produces that. So that the issue and upshot of all, is a Holy and Virtuous life, *To deny*
G 3 *ungod-*

Vol. XI. *ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world; to love God and our neighbour; to deal justly, and to be kind, and peaceable, and charitable towards all men.*

II. Consider that Religion consists in an entire and universal obedience to the Will of God, in *a respect to all his commandments, and hating every evil way.* Here the Power of Godliness consists in being *holy in all manner of conversation.*

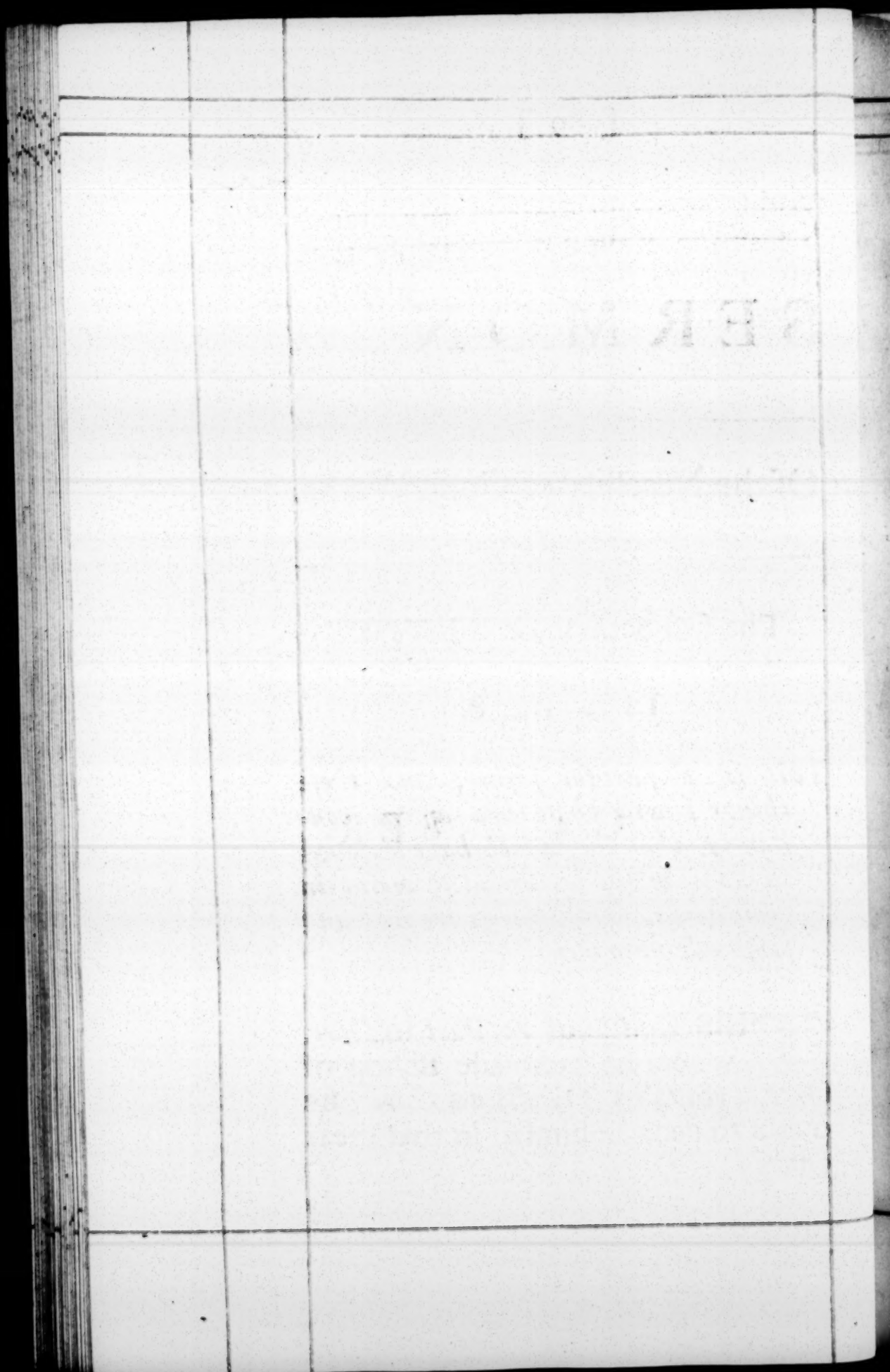
III. Consider that Religion chiefly respects God, and another World. *A Form of Religion*, if it were artificially contrived, might possibly serve to cheat men, and be useful enough to all the interests and advantages of this World. But we are to do all things in reference to God, who cannot be imposed upon with shews and pretences; and with regard to another World, where no *Form of Religion* will be current without the Power of *it*

it. Yea, and in reference to this World, if there be any advantage in seeming Religious, certainly the best way to seem to be so, is to be so indeed.

Serm. 3

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S E R.



SERMON IV.

Of the Necessity of Good Works.

The first Sermon on this Text.

TIT. III. 8.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

THIS Epistle of St. Paul to Titus, whom he had made Bishop of Crete, contains Directions how he ought to demean himself in that great charge.

I. By

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1. By appointing in every City Bishops or Elders to teach and govern those that were already, or should afterwards by their means be converted to the Faith of Christ; and to be very careful to make choice of worthy and fit Persons into this high Office; Men of sound Doctrine, and unblameable Lives. *Chap. I. from ver. 5. to the end.*

2. By his own Doctrine and Conversation among them. And this is the subject of the two following Chapters, in which he gives him a strict charge, to be very careful both of his Doctrine and his Life. Of his Doctrine, that it be according to the soundness and purity of the Gospel; not such corrupt and adulterate stuff as the false Apostles and Teachers were wont to vend among them, *Chap. 2. 1. But speak thou the things which become sound Doctrine; which he elsewhere calls the Doctrine or Truth which is according to Godliness,* such a Doctrine as tends to reform the lives of men, to make them better, and more like to God. And then he

he should be careful likewise, that his Life and Conversation be exemplary in all Virtue and Goodness; without which the best words will be of little weight, and the wisest Doctrines and Counsels of small efficacy and force to perswade others to the practice of them, *ver. 7. In all things shewing thy self a pattern of good works.* When sound Doctrine is seconded by the good life of the Teacher, it must have great authority and force of perswasion, *ver. 15. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority; let no man despise thee.* If the Minister of God do but so preach and so live, this will give him authority, and set him above contempt; let men despise such an one if they can.

More particularly, as he would have him instruct men in general, in all the Virtues of a good life; so more especially, the several ages and conditions of men in the Duties and Virtues respectively belonging to them; to young and old, Men and Women.

And

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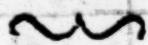
And because great scandal had been brought upon the Christian Religion, by the undutiful carriage of Servants and Subjects towards their Masters and Magistrates, upon a false notion of Christian liberty, advanc'd and propagated by the false Apostles and *Gnostick* Libertines, he gives *Titus* in particular, charge to put Christians in mind of their Duty in this particular, and to inculcate it earnestly upon them, that the Christian Religion might not be slander'd upon this account, *Chap. 2. ver. 9, 10. Exhort Servants to be obedient to their Masters, &c. that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Chap. 3. 1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to be ready to every good work; that is, in short, to endeavour to be good in all relations, and in all sorts and kinds of goodness.*

And then, *ver. 8.* he lays great stress and weight upon this matter, that Christians should constantly and upon all occasions be taught the great necessity of the Virtues of a good life.

This

This is a faithful saying, &c. By which solemn and vehement kind of expression, the Apostle seems to insinuate, that the false Apostles did exalt the virtue of Faith, to the prejudice and neglect of a good life; as if by a mere speculative belief and profession of the Christian Religion men were discharged and released from the practice of all Virtue and Goodness. And this is very probable, because we find these kind of licentious Doctrines very frequently reflected on, and reprov'd by the Apostles in their Epistles, and especially by St. Paul. The false Apostles made the Christian Religion a matter of mere speculation and dispute, but laid no weight upon the Virtues of a good life. And therefore St. Paul, after he had charged Titus to inculcate upon Christians the necessity of good Works, immediately adds, *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law: for they are unprofitable and vain;* intimating that the false Apostles instead of pressing the necessity of a good life, did amuse people with these idle notions and disputes.

But



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But to return to my Text. *This is a faithful saying.* This kind of Preface the Apostle useth several times, but always when he is speaking of something that is of great weight and concernment to us, and which deserves our serious attention and regard ; as in 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.* 1 Tim. 4. 8. *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* *This is a faithful saying.* And 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12. *This is a faithful saying ; If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him ; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him : if we deny him, he also will deny us.* And so likewise here in the Text, *This is a faithful saying, that they which have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good works.* By which you see that it is not a Form which the Apostle useth of course, and applies to any thing, but only to things of more than ordinary consideration and regard, such as are of the essence of Christianity, and fundamental

Fruits of Faith.

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damental to the belief and practice of it.

Serm 4.

This is a faithful saying, πιστὸς λόγος, a credible saying, that which every Man that truly understands the Nature and Design of Religion will readily assent to.

And this I will that thou affirm constantly. He chargeth him to preach this upon all occasions, lest the Doctrine of Justification by Faith and by Grace, without any works of Righteousness preceding, should be turned into licentiousness, as it had been by some, and men should falsely conclude, that because works of Righteousness were not necessary before Justification, and to bring men into that state, they were not necessary neither afterwards to our continuance in that state.

The Apostle indeed did teach that *God did justify the ungodly* by the grace of the Gospel, and *faith in Christ*, that is, that those who did sincerely believe and embrace the Gospel, tho they had been never so great sinners before,

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before, were justified upon that Faith, that is, all their former sins were forgiven, and they were received into the favour of God. But tho' works of Righteousness were not necessary before their Justification, yet they are necessary afterwards, because the Faith of the Gospel, and the embracing of Christianity doth imply a stipulation and engagement on our part, to live according to the laws and rules of the Gospel, which do strictly enjoin all kind of Virtue and Goodness. The Covenant of Baptism, by which we are enter'd into Christianity, doth contain on our part, not only a Profession of Faith in Christ, but a solemn promise *to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world.* So that it is the greatest mistake in the world to think, that because we are justified by Faith and the Profession of Christianity without works of Righteousness, therefore we are under no obligation to a good life: for Faith in Christ, and the sincere Profession of the Christian Religion doth imply a good life, and an engagement to the practice of all Virtue
and

and goodness, which if we do not perform and make good, we fail in our part of the Covenant, and thereby forfeit all the Blessings and Benefits promised therein on God's part.

Therefore it is observable, that the Apostle, after he had spoken of our justification by Grace without works of Righteousness, gives this charge to *Titus*, to press the necessity of good works upon those who did believe and embrace the Profession of the Gospel, as it were on purpose to prevent all mistake and abuse of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, and the free Grace and Mercy of God in Jesus Christ, *ver. 5, 6, 7.* *Not by works of Righteousness which we have done; but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that is, by our solemn Profession of Christianity at our Baptism; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life. And then he adds, ver. 8. This is a faithful*

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saying,

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saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works; that is, that they who are thus justified by the Faith of the Gospel, should be so far from thinking themselves hereby excused from good works, that they should upon this account be the more careful to maintain and practice them, because by the very Profession of the Christian Faith and Religion they have solemnly engaged themselves so to do.

That they which have believed in God, that is, who have taken upon them the Profession of Christianity in their Baptism. For it is not improbable, that the Apostle having spoken of Baptism just before, may by this phrase of believing in God, refer to that Profession of Faith made in Baptism, which began with these words, I believe in God; and then, they which have believed in God, are those who in Baptism have made a solemn Profession of Christianity; as if he had said, These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that all that profess themselves

themselves Christians be careful to maintain good works. Or if by the Phrase of *believing in God*, we will understand an assent to all Divine Revelations, more especially that of the Gospel, and the Christian Religion, the most perfect that ever God made of his Will to Mankind, the matter will come much to the same issue. Serm. 4:

Be careful to maintain good works. This Phrase seems in the latter end of this Epistle, to be used in a very restrained sense; for labouring in an honest calling, *ver. 14. Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.* In the margin of your Bibles you will find it render'd, *to profess honest trades, Let ours also learn to profess honest trades for necessary uses*, that is, for the supply of their necessities: but in the Text it seems more agreeable to the scope of the Apostle's Discourse, to understand the Phrase of *maintaining good works*, for the practice of all Christian Virtues, especially those which are more useful and beneficial to human Society; among which, diligence and industry in an honest calling

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ling is none of the least considerable, because it follows, *these things are good and profitable unto men.* And indeed these are properly works of goodness, which redound to the publick benefit and advantage.

But *good works* may well be taken in a larger sense for all sorts of virtuous actions. And so it is certainly used several times in this Epistle, Chap. 1. 16. *Unto every good work reprobate,* speaking of all profligate Persons who were lost to all Virtue and Goodness. Chap. 2. 7. *In all things shewing thy self a pattern of good works,* that is, an example of all kind of Virtue. And Chap. 3. 1. *Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates, and to be ready to every good work,* that is, to the practice of all goodness, of what soever is honest and virtuous in it self, amiable and commendable in the sight of others, useful and beneficial to any.

Having thus explained the words, I come now to consider the *two* points contained in them.

First,

Serm. 4.

First, The certain Truth and Credibility of this saying or proposition, that they which have believed in God, ought to be careful to maintain good works. *This is a faithful saying*, that is, a most evident and credible Truth. And,

Secondly, The great Fitness and Necessity of inculcating this upon all Christians, that the Christian Religion doth indispensably require the Virtues of a good life. *These things I will that thou affirm constantly, &c.* I begin with the

First of these points, viz. The certain Truth and evident Credibility of this saying or proposition, that *they which have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good works. This is a faithful saying*, πιστὸς λόγος, *a saying worthy of credit, a most certain and credible truth.* And it will appear to be so, whether we consider the great End and Design of Religion in general, or of the Christian Religion in particular.


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I. If we consider the great End and Design of Religion in general, which is to make us happy, by possessing our minds with the belief of a God, and those other Principles which have a necessary connexion with that belief ; and by obliging us to the Obedience and Practice of his Laws.

i. By possessing our minds with the belief of a God, and of those other Principles which have a necessary connexion with it. Such are the belief of the Divine Perfections, of the infinite Goodness, and Wisdom, and Power, and Truth, and Justice, and Purity of the Divine Nature ; a firm persuasion of his Providence, that he Governs and Administers the affairs of the World, and takes notice of the actions of men, and will call them to an account for them ; of the immortality of our Souls, and their endless duration after death, and consequently of the eternal Rewards and Punishments of another life. These are the great Principles of natural Religion, which Mankind are in some measure

measure possess with, and perswaded of, without any external Revelation from God; and these are necessary and fundamental to Religion, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* declares, *Heb. 11. 6. Without faith it is impossible to please God*; that is, there can be no such thing as the Practice of Religion, without the Belief of the Principles of it; and what these are he tells us in the next words. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

But then we must not rest here, in the belief of a God, and the Principles of Religion; for this Faith is not required of us for it self, but in order to some farther end, which if it be not attained by us, the mere belief of the Principles of Religion is to no purpose, neither acceptable to God, nor useful and beneficial to our selves. God would not have imprinted the notion of himself upon our Nature, he would not have discovered himself to us, nor have required of us the belief of his Being and Providence, merely that we might know

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there is such a Being as God in the World, who made us and governs us ; but that this belief might have its proper influence upon us, to oblige us to the obedience of his Laws, which are the proper Causes and Means of our Happiness. It will not avail us at all, nor is it in the least acceptable to God, for men *to profess that they know him, when in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate*, as the Apostle describes some, *Chap. 1. 16.* And therefore,

2. The great End and Design of Religion is, that our minds being possessed and prepared by the Principles of Religion, the Belief of these should have its proper influence upon us, which is effectually to oblige us to the Obedience and Practice of God's Laws. Now the Laws which God hath given us to live by, as they are the Rule and Measure of our Duty, by the performance whereof only we can hope to gain the favour of God, so they are the proper Directions and Means in order to our Happiness ; they teach us both the conditions of our Happiness,

Happiness, and the proper qualification and disposition for it.

Serm.4.

Obedience to the Laws of God is the condition of our Happiness, both Temporal and Eternal, both in this world and the other. The promises which God hath made of temporal felicity and blessings, are upon condition of our obedience to his Laws ; it is *Godliness* only that *bath the promise of this life, as well as of the other*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. A truth so certain and evident, that the Apostle thought fit to add that solemn seal to it, which he prefaceth to the saying in the Text, *This is a faithful saying*. And tho' God be pleased, out of his excessive Goodness to bestow many temporal blessings and favours upon very bad men, that by this *goodness of his* he might lead them to *Repentance* ; yet God never made any promise of temporal blessings to wicked men, but on the contrary, hath threatened them with great temporal evils and calamities ; but all the promises even of temporal good things, are made to the obeying of God's Laws ; *to them that keep his Covenant, and*
re member

Vol. XI. remember his commandments to do them.

And this is not only the condition upon which the promises of temporal blessings are suspended, but generally, and for the most part, the natural Cause and Means of those blessings: for there is no Moral Duty enjoined by God, no Virtue the practice whereof he requires from us, which does not naturally tend to our temporal felicity in this world; as Temperance and Chastity to that invaluable blessing of Health, and to the preservation of our Estate, which is wasted by lewd and riotous living; Humility and Meekness to our Quiet and Safety; Justice and Integrity to our Reputation and Honour, one of the chief instruments of temporal Prosperity and Success. Kindness and Charity, and a readiness *to do good to all men as we have opportunity*, are in their Nature apt to recommend us exceedingly to the love and esteem of all men, and to their favourable regard and assistance, when we stand in need of it. And so I might instance in all other Virtues, the sincere practice whereof, tho' it be
be

be not in all cases certain and infallible, yet it is the best and wisest course that any man can take, to attain the greatest happiness which this World can afford, and to avoid the greatest miseries and calamities of it: as on the contrary, there is no vice, no wicked practice, but is naturally productive of some great temporal mischief and inconvenience. Serm. 4.

And then the practice of Virtue and Goodness, as it is the absolute and indispensable condition of our future Happiness in another World, so is it the necessary and only proper qualification for it, and the certain and infallible means of attaining it.

It is an absolute and indispensable condition of attaining it; and without this, it is in vain to hope for it. As God will certainly punish the transgressors of his Laws, so nothing but obedience to them can pretend to his rewards. This God hath most expressly declared, that *without purity and holiness no man shall see him; that Christ is the Author of eternal Salvation only to them that obey him.* And

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And if God had not declared this in his Word, the Consideration of God's essential Holiness and Justice would sufficiently assure us of it.

But besides this, in the very Nature and reason of the thing, Holiness and Goodness is the necessary and only proper qualification for Happiness. Without the blessed sight and enjoyment of God we cannot be happy, and Holiness and Goodness can only qualify us for this. For Happiness is a state which results from a temper and disposition of mind suited to it; and where this is wanting, the Man is no more capable of Happiness, than he that is sick is of ease. Virtue and Goodness are so essential to Happiness, that where these are not, there is no capacity of it. These make us like to God, who is the Fountain and Pattern of all Happiness; and if we be not like to God, we can have no enjoyment of him. And a wicked Man, if he could steal into Heaven, into the Sight and Presence of God, would from the temper and disposition of his own mind, so unsuitable to that holy place
and

and company, be extremely miserable, even in the mansions of the blessed. Such a temper of mind, such a polluted and guilty Conscience, as a sinner carries with him out of this World, will accompany him, and remain with him in the other; and guilt is always restless and full of torment, and tho' God should not punish it with any positive infliction of pain, would of its own Nature, make a Man for ever miserable. So that it is a vain dream and imagination, that any Man without the practice of Holiness and Virtue in this life, can be happy in the other. A sincere and thorough Repentance of all our sins will indeed clear our Consciences of guilt, and by the Mercy of God make us capable of Happiness: but it does this by changing our minds, and reconciling them to Holiness and Goodness, in firm purpose and resolution of a new life; and by changing our lives and actions too, if there be opportunity for it; but till this change be wrought, either in firm purpose, or in real effect, it is impossible we should be happy. And tho' I will not deny

ny but this may be done by a deep
 Vol. XI. Repentance, and such as God sees
 would prove sincere, in the last act
 of our lives : yet it is extream mad-
 ness to run such a hazard, because we
 may be cut off from the opportunity
 of it ; or if God should afford us time
 and grace to that purpose, it is the
 hardest thing in the World to have
 any comfortable and well-grounded
 assurance of the sincerity of it. So
 that very little hopes of Heaven and
 Happiness can be given upon any o-
 ther terms, than the general and con-
 stant course of a Holy and Virtuous
 life ; and least of all to those who
 have all their life long resolved to
 venture their everlasting Happiness,
 upon the infinite uncertainties of a
 Death-bed Repentance at the last.
 But,

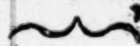
II. The Truth of this Proposi-
 tion, that *they which have believed*
in God, should be careful to maintain
good works, or that Faith and the
 Virtues of a good life ought to go
 together. I say, the Truth of this
 will yet be more evident, if we con-
 sider the great End and Design of the
 Christian

Christian Religion in particular, which was to reform the World, to purifie the hearts and lives of men from corrupt affections and wicked practices, to teach men to excel in all kinds of Virtue and Goodness. Serm. 4.

And this is every where in the new Testament most expressely declared. The great promise of blessedness is made to the Virtues of Meekness, and Patience, and Peaceableness, and Purity, and Righteousness, as our Saviour expressely teacheth in that excellent Sermon of his upon the Mount, which is the Summary of the Christian Religion. Eph. 4. 17, 18, &c. *This I say therefore, and testifie in the Lord, that ye henceforth, that is, now that ye have embraced Christianity, walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ: If so be that ye have heard him, and have*

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have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts : And be renewed in the spirit of your mind ; and that ye put on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour : for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath : Neither give place to the Devil. Let him that stole, steal no more : but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all Malice. And be ye kind one to another, &c. So that you see, that unless there be an universal Reformation of heart and life, we have

have not so learned Christ as the truth  is in Jesus, we do not rightly under- Serm. 4.
stand the Gospel, and the tendency
of the Christian Religion. Gal. 5. 22,
23, 24. But the Fruits of the spirit, of
that Spirit which the Christian Religi-
on endows men withal, is love, joy,
peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,
fidelity, meekness, temperance; and they
that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh
with the affections and lusts; that is,
they that profess themselves Christi-
ans, are oblig'd to endeavour after
all these Virtues, and to put off the
contrary lusts and vices. Phil. 4. 8.
Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are
true, whatsoever things are honest, what-
soever things are just, whatsoever things
are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,
whatsoever things are of good report, If
there be any virtue, and if there be any
praise, think on these things. St. James
likewise declares to the same purpose
the genuine effect of Christianity,
which he calls the knowledge and wis-
dom which is from above. Jam. 3.
13, 14, 15, 17. Who is a wise man,
and endowed with knowledge amongst
you? Let him shew out of a good conver-
sation his works with meekness of wisdom.

I

But

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But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lye not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish. And the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisie. To which I will add but one Text more, which is the sum and comprehension of all the rest, and it is Chap. 2. of this Epistle to Titus, ver. 11. The grace of God, so he calls the Doctrine of the Gospel, The grace of God which brings Salvation unto all men hath appeared, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world.

I might proceed particularly to shew, that the whole Dispensation and Doctrine of the Gospel, and all the parts of them are calculated to raise and exalt human Nature to the highest pitch and perfection of Virtue and Goodness, and effectually to reform the Spirits and Lives of Men.

The

The Dispensation of the Gospel, or the Christian Religion, consists in God's merciful condescension to send his own and only Son in our Nature, to live among us, and to die for us. The Doctrine of the Gospel consists in the things to be believed; the Duties to be practised by us; and the Arguments and Encouragements to the practice of those Duties. Now I shall briefly shew, that the Design of every part both of the Dispensation and Doctrine of the Gospel, is to reform the Minds and Manners of men, and to engage them to the practice of all Virtue and Goodness. And,

I. For the Dispensation of the Gospel; by which I mean the gracious Method which the Wisdom of God hath pitched upon, for the Salvation and recovery of Mankind, by sending his only begotten Son into the World in our Nature, to live among us, and to die for us. So that the principal parts of this dispensation are these three.

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1. His Incarnation or appearing in our Nature.

2. His Life.

3. His Death and Sufferings for us. And I shall shew, that the great Design of all this was to reform Mankind, and make them better.

I. For his Incarnation. The great Design of his coming into the World, and appearing in our Nature, was this; and this was the reason of the name *Jesus*, given him at his Birth, as the Angel tells us, *Matth. 1. 21. His name shall be called Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.* *Matt. 9. 13.* He himself tells us, that *he came to call sinners to repentance*, that is, to reclaim them to a better and more virtuous course of life; and *Chap. 18. 11. The son of man is come, to save that which was lost*, that is, to recover Mankind from a state of Sin and Misery, to a state of Holiness and Happiness. And *St. Peter*, exhorting the *Jews* to Repentance, useth this Argument, that for this very end God sent him among them,

Acts

Acts 3. 26. Unto you first God sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquity. Heb. 9. 26. But now once in the end of the world he hath appeared to abolish sin, that is, to destroy both the guilt and power of sin. 1 John 3. 5. Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins. And ver. 8. For this purpose the son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

Serm. 4.

2. This likewise was the great Design of his Life, of his dwelling and conversing with us so long, to teach us by his Doctrine in all Holiness and Virtue, and to give us the perfect pattern and example of it in his life. For his Doctrine, I have spoke of that by it self: but besides that, one principal end of his living amongst us, was that in the course of his life, and all the actions of it, he might give us a perfect and familiar example of all Holiness and Virtue, and therefore we are commanded to take him for our great Pattern. *Learn of me, saith he, for I am meek and lowly of Spirit, Matt. 11. 29. John 13. 15. after that great instance of his Humility in*

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washing his Disciples feet, he adds,
*For I have given you an example, that
 ye should do as I have done to you.*

3. This also was the great design of his Death and Sufferings. So the Apostles every where teach, *Gal. 1.*
 4. speaking of Christ, *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, that is, that he might rescue us from the vicious customs and practices of the World. 1 Pet. 1. 18. Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. The Death and Sufferings of Christ, did not only make expiation for our sins; but are proposed to us as a Pattern of Mortification to sin, and Resurrection to a new life, and a most powerful Argument thereto. Rom. 6. 1, 2. 3. &c. And 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. speaking of the Love of Christ in laying down his life for us, For the love of Christ, saith he, constraineth us, because we thus judge; that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all,*

to reform the manners of men.

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Serm. 4

all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them. From whence he infers, ver. 17. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are past away ; behold, all things are become new. And ver. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, that is, he hath made him who was without sin, a Sacrifice for our sins, which should be a strong Motive and Argument to us, to endeavour after the righteousness of God.

II. As the whole Dispensation of the Gospel tends to this end, so more particularly does the Doctrine of the Gospel, and every part of it. Now the whole Doctrine of the Gospel may be referr'd to these *three* heads.

1. The things to be believed by us.

2. The Duties to be practised. And,

3. The Arguments and Encouragements

ments to the practice of these Duties. And all these have a most direct and proper tendency to reform Mankind, and effectually to engage us to the practice of all Holiness and Virtue.

1. The matters of Faith proposed in the Gospel have a direct tendency to a good life, and immediate influence upon it. All the Articles of our Creed, and whatever the Christian Religion proposeth to our belief concerning God the Father, the Creator and Governour of all things; and concerning Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour; and concerning the Holy Spirit of grace; the Catholick Church; the Communion of Saints; the Resurrection of the Dead, and everlasting life after Death; all and each of these are so many Arguments and Reasons, Motives and Encouragements to a good life. In general, our *hearts* are said *to be purified by Faith*, Acts 15. 9. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Faith is there reckoned among the principal Sources and Fountains of a good life, *The end of the commandment*, (the word is *παραγυγίας*) *the end of the Gospel declarati-*
on

on is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of Faith unfeigned. So that a sincere Faith, is the great principle of Charity, which is *the fulfilling of the law*, and comprehends in it the Duties of both Tables. And here I might particularly shew, what influence the several Articles of the Christian Faith have upon the practice of Holiness and Virtue in our lives: but this would be too large a Field of discourse, and the thing is very plain and obvious to every Man's consideration; and therefore I shall content my self with what I have said in general concerning the influence of Faith upon a good Life.

Serm. 4.

2. The Duties enjoyned by the Christian Religion do likewise tend more immediately to the same end and design; I mean the Laws and Precepts of the Gospel, which are nothing else but so many Rules of good life, and in the main substance of them are the the Laws of Nature clear'd and perfected. For *Christ came not to destroy the Law*, which was in force before; but to explain and clear it, where, through the corruption and

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and degeneracy of Mankind, it was grown obscure and doubtful, and to perfect it by superadding some Rules and Precepts of greater Goodness and Perfection, than seem to have been enjoined by it ; as to abstain from all kind of revenge, to love our enemies, and not only to be ready to forgive them the greatest injuries they have done us, but to do them the greatest good, and even to be perfectly reconciled to them after the highest provocations, when ever they are in a meet capacity and disposition for it. So that the Precepts of the Christian Religion are a plain and perfect Rule of all Virtue and Goodness, and the best and most absolute system of Moral Philosophy that ever was in the World, containing all the Rules of Virtue and a good Life, which are scatter'd and dispersed in the writings of the Philosophers, and the wise men of all ages, and delivering them to us with greater clearness and certainty, in a more simple and unaffected manner, with greater Authority, Force and Efficacy upon the minds, than any Philosopher and Lawgiver ever did ; teaching us how to worship
God

God in the best manner, and most suitable to his Nature and Perfections ; how to demean our selves towards others with all Meekness and Humility, Justice and Integrity, Kindness and Charity ; and how to govern our selves and our own unruly appetites and passions, and to bring them within the bounds of reason, much better than any Law or Institution that ever was in the World ; and all these Duties and Virtues strictly commanded and enjoined in the Name and Authority of God, by one evidently empower'd and commissioned by him, and sent from Heaven on purpose to instruct us in the Nature and Practice of them. So that the Doctrine of the Gospel, in respect of the Laws and Precepts of it, is a plain and perfect Rule of a good life. And then,

3. The Christian Religion contains the most powerful Arguments and Encouragements to this purpose ; and these are the Threatnings and Promises of the Gospel.

(1.) The terrible Threatnings of eternal Misery and Punishments to all the

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the workers of iniquity, and wilful and impenitent transgressors of these Laws. And this is an Argument which taketh the fastest and surest hold upon human Nature, and will many times move and affect, when no other considerations will work upon us. Many men that could not be wrought upon by the Love of God and Goodness, nor by the hopes of everlasting Happiness, have been affrighted and reclaimed from an evil course by the fear of Hell and Damnation, and the awe of a Judgment to come. To think of lying under the terrible wrath and displeasure of Almighty God to eternal Ages, of being extremely and for ever miserable without intermission and without end, must needs be a very dismal consideration to any Man that can think and consider : *for who knows the power of God's anger ? who can dwell with everlasting burnings ?* And yet to this horrible danger, to this intolerable misery, do all the workers of iniquity, every one that lives in the wilful contempt and disobedience of the Laws of the Gospel, expose themselves ; and this as expressly revealed and declared to us,

as

as it is possible for words to declare any thing. *Matt. 13. 40, 41, 42. So shall it be in the end of the World. The Son of Man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Matt. 25. 41. there you have the very Sentence recorded, which shall be pronounced upon finners at the great day ; Then shall the King say to them on his left hand, that is, to the wicked, Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And ver. 46. These shall go into everlasting punishment. And this is that which St. Paul tells us, renders the Doctrine of the Gospel so powerful for the Conversion and Salvation of finners Rom. 1. 16. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God to Salvation, to every one that believeth. And ver. 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And Chap. 2. 8, 9. To them that obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribu-*

Vol. XI. *lation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil. Eph. 5. 6. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things, viz the sins he had mentioned before, cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of disobedience. 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 9. When the Lord Jesus, speaking of the Judgment of the great day, shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. So that the Gospel gives all imaginable discouragement to the transgression and disobedience of God's Laws, by denunciation of the greatest dread and terror that can be presented to human Nature, enough to make any sensible and considerate Man willing to do or forbear any thing, to escape so horrible danger, to cut off a foot or a hand, or to pluck out an eye, not only to restrain Nature in any thing, but even to offer violence to it, rather than to be cast into hell-fire, where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched;*

to reform the manners of men.

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quenched, as our Saviour expresseth it, *Mark 9. 48.* This is the first Argument *Serm. 4.* from the threatnings. The

(2.) Is from the Promises of the Gospel, which are full encouragement to obedience ; and there are *three* great Promises made in the Gospel to Repentance, and the obedience of God's Laws.

1. The promise of Pardon and Forgiveness.

2. Of Grace and Assistance.

3. Of Eternal Life and Happiness. And these certainly contain all the encouragement we can desire ; that God will pardon what is past, assist us in well-doing for the future, and reward our perseverance in it to the end with eternal life ; and all this is expressly promised to us in the Gospel.

1. The Pardon and Forgiveness of sins past. *Acts 13. 38, 39.* *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man, is preached*

Vol. XI. *preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him, all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. And this is a great encouragement to amendment, to be fully indemnified from all past sins and transgressions; and this Promise is made to believing, which includes in it Repentance and a better course.*

2. The promise of Grace and Assistance to enable us to all the purposes of Holiness and Obedience. And this our Saviour hath most expressly and emphatically promised to all that are sincerely resolved to make use of it; and that upon the easiest condition that can be, If we do but earnestly pray to God for it, telling us that we may with the same confidence and assurance of success, (nay with much greater) ask this of God, as we can any thing that is good, of the kindest Father upon Earth, *Luke 11. 9.* And surely here is a mighty encouragement to well-doing, to be assured that God is most ready to afford his Grace and Assistance to us to this purpose, if we heartily beg it of him. So that neither

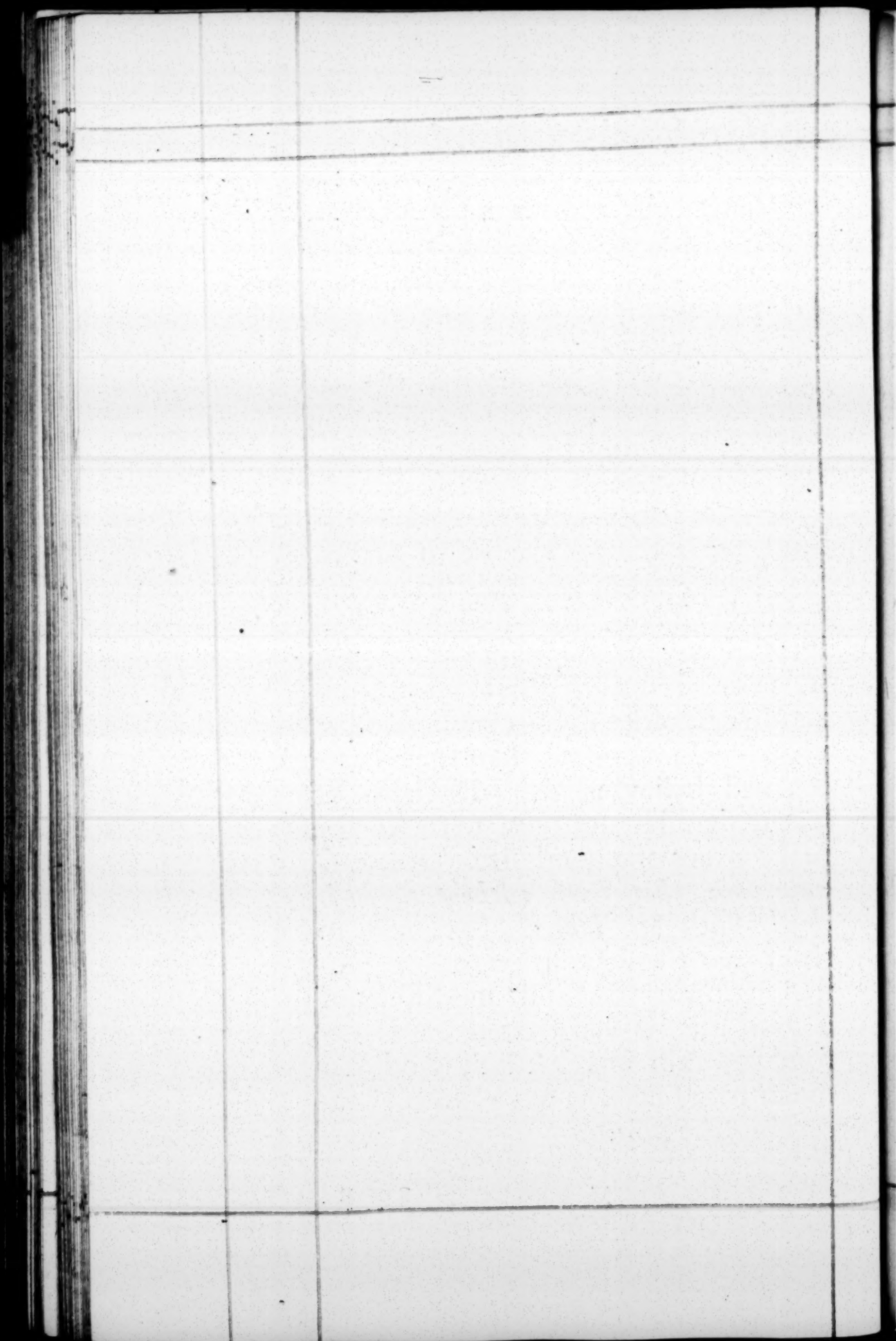
ther the consideration of our own weakness, nor of the power of our spiritual Enemies, can be any discouragement or just excuse to us from doing our Duty, since God offers us so freely all the strength that we need, and to endow us with an inward Principle of well-doing, more powerful and effectual to all the purposes of Holiness and Virtue, than any opposition that can be raised against it. So St. *John* assures us, that we have God on our side, and the powerful assistance of his Holy Spirit, and therefore are sure of Victory in this conflict, 1 *John* 4. 4. *Ye are of God, little Children, and have overcome; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* If the Spirit of God be more powerful than the Devil, we are of the stronger side; and we have no just cause to complain of our inability and weakness to do the Will of God, since that strength and assistance, which we may have for asking, is to all effects and purposes our own power. And therefore St. *Paul* made no scruple to call it so, and to say, he was able to

do all things, *I am able to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

3. The promise of eternal life; and this is the great promise of the Gospel, and the Crown of all the rest, *1 Jehn 2. 25. This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* And this is a reward so great and glorious, and so infinitely beyond the portion of our service and obedience, that nothing can be more encouraging. What should not men do *in hopes of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, hath promised to us?* The expectation of such a reward, so well assur'd to us, is sufficient to encourage us to do our utmost, and to strain all our powers for the securing and attaining of it, which we cannot do without Holiness and Obedience of life; for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* So that all the promises of the Gospel are to encourage and strengthen us in well-doing, *to make us partakers of the divine nature, that we should cleanse our selves from all filthiness, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.*

Thus you see that the whole Dispensation

spensation of the Gospel, and the Doctrine of it, and every part of them, are all calculated to reform the minds and manners of men. This is the great design of the Christian Religion, and all the Parts and Powers of it, to clear and confirm and perfect the natural Law, to reinforce the obligation of Moral Duties by severer threatenings and greater promises, and to offer men more powerful grace and assistance to the practice of all Goodness and Virtue; and they do not understand the Christian Religion, who imagine any other End and Design of it. There is nothing that our Saviour and his Apostles do every where more vehemently declare, than that hearing and believing the Doctrine of Christ signifies nothing, without the real Virtues of a good life. *Know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead, saith St. James.* For men to think that the mere belief of the Gospel, without the Fruits and Effects of a good life, will save them, is a very fond and vain imagination. And thus much may suffice to have spoken concerning the point.



SERMON V.

Of the Necessity of Good Works.

The second Sermon on this Text.

TIT. III. 8.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

FROM these words I have proposed to handle these two points.

First, The certain Truth and Credibility of this saying or Proposition,
K 3 That

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That they which have believed in God, ought to be careful to maintain good works. This I have spoken to, and come now to the

Second, The great Fitness and Necessity of inculcating frequently upon all that profess themselves Christians, the indispensable Necessity of the Practice of the Virtues of a good life. In the handling of this point, I shall do these two things.

First, I shall shew the great Fitness and Necessity of pressing upon People the indispensable Necessity of the Virtues of a good life. And,

Secondly, Answer an Objection or two, to which the Preaching of this kind of Doctrine may seem liable. I begin with the

First of these, viz. To shew the great Fitness and Necessity of inculcating and pressing upon all Christians the indispensable Necessity of the Virtues of a good life. And this will appear to be very fit and necessary upon these two accounts.

I. Be-

I. Because men are so very apt to deceive themselves in this matter, and so hardly brought to that wherein Religion mainly consists, *viz.* the Practice of real goodness.

II. Because of the indispensable Necessity of the thing to render us capable of the Divine Favour and Acceptance, and of the reward of eternal Life and Happiness.

I. Because men are so very apt to deceive themselves in this matter, and so hardly brought to that wherein Religion mainly consists, *viz.* the practice of real goodness. They are extremely desirous to reconcile (if it be possible) the hopes of eternal Happiness in another World, with a liberty to live as they list in this present World; they are loth to be at the trouble and drudgery of mortifying their lusts, and subduing and governing their passions, and bridling their tongues, and ordering their whole conversation aright, and practising all those Duties which are comprehended in those two great Command-

K 4

ments,

ments, the love of God and our Neighbour. They would fain get into the favour of God, and *make their calling and election sure*, by some easier way, than by *giving all diligence, to add to their faith virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and brotherly kindness, and charity.*

The plain truth of the matter is, men had rather Religion should be any thing, than what indeed it is, the thwarting and crossing of our vicious inclinations, the curing of our evil and corrupt affections; the due care and Government of our unruly appetites and passions, the sincere endeavour and constant practice of all Holiness and Virtue in our lives; and therefore they had much rather have something that might handsomely palliate and excuse their evil inclinations, than to extirpate them and cut them up; and rather than reform and amend their vicious lives, make God an honourable amends and compensation for them in some other way.

This hath been the way and folly of Mankind in all ages, to defeat the
great

great End and Design of Religion, and to thrust it by, by substituting something else in the place of it, which they hope may serve the turn as well, and which hath the appearance of as much Devotion and Respect, and perhaps of more cost and pains, than that which God requires of them. Men have ever been apt thus to impose upon themselves, and to please themselves with a conceit of pleasing God full as well, or better, by some other way, than that which he hath pitched upon and appointed for them; not considering that *God is a great King*, and will be observed and obeyed by his Creatures in his own way; and that Obedience to what he Commands is better and more acceptable to him, than any other Sacrifice that we can offer, which he hath not required at our hands; that he is infinitely wise and good, and therefore the Laws and Rules, which he hath given us to live by, are more likely and certain means of our Happiness, than any inventions and devices of our own.

Thus


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Thus, I say, it hath been in all Ages. The old World, after that general deluge which God sent to punish the raging wickedness and impiety of men, by sweeping all Mankind from off the face of the Earth, excepting only one Family, which was saved to be the seminary of a new and better race of men ; I say after this, the World in a short space fell off from the Worship of the true God, to the Worship of Idols and false gods ; being unwilling to bring themselves to a conformity and likeness to the true God, they chose false gods like themselves, such as might not only excuse, but even countenance and abett their lewd and vicious practices.

And when God had made a new Revelation of himself to the Nation of the *Jews*, and given them the chief Heads and Substance of the natural Law, written over again with his own Finger in Tables of Stone, and many other Laws concerning Religious Worship, and their civil Conversation suited and adapted to their present temper and condition ; yet how
soon

soon did their Religion degenerate into external observances, purifications and washings, and a multitude of Sacrifices, without any great regard to the inward and substantial parts of Religion, and the Practice of those Moral Duties and Virtues, which were in the first place required of them, and without which all the rest found no acceptance with God. Hence are those frequent complaints in the Prophets, that their Religion was degenerated into Form and Ceremony, into Oblations and Sacrifices, the observance of Fasts, and Sabbaths, and new Moons; but had no Power and Efficacy upon their hearts and lives; was wholly destitute of inward Purity and Holiness, of all substantial Virtues, and the Fruits of Righteousness in a good life. Thus God complains by the Prophet *Isa. Chap. I. II, &c. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination unto me, the new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before*

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before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together saith the Lord. Tho' your sins be as scarlet, &c. Upon these terms God declares himself ready to be reconciled to them, and to have mercy on them. But all their external Services and Sacrifices, separated from real Goodness and Righteousness, were so far from appeasing God's wrath, that they did but increase the provocation. And to the same purpose, Chap. 66. 2, 3. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swines blood: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an Idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their Soul delighted in their abomination. Jer. 6. 19, 20. Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkned unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it. To what purpose cometh there to me incense*

incense from Sheba? and the sweet
cane from a far countrey? Your burnt-
offerings are not acceptable, nor your
sacrifices sweet unto me. They thought
to please God with costly Incense
and Sacrifices, whilst they rejected
his Law. And Chap. 7. 4, 5, 6. Trust
ye not in lying words, saying, The tem-
ple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,
the temple of the Lord are these. For
if ye thorowly amend your ways, and
your doings; if ye thorowly execute
judgment between a man and his neigh-
bour; if ye oppress not the stranger,
the fatherless, and the widow, and shed
not innocent blood in this place; nei-
ther walk after other Gods to your hurt:
Then will I cause you to dwell in this
place. And ver. 8, 9, 10. Behold, ye
trust in lying words that cannot profit.
Will ye steal, murder, and commit adul-
tery, and swear falsely, and burn in-
cense unto Baal, and walk after other
Gods, whom ye know not: and come
and stand before me in this house, which
is called by my Name, and say, we are
delivered to do all these abominations?
This was to add impudence to all
their other impieties, to think that
the worship of God, and his holy
Temple

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Temple did excuse these gross Crimes and Immoralities. *Micah. 6. 6, 7, 8.* There God represents the *Jews*, as desirous to please God at any rate, provided their Lusts and Vices might be spared, and they might not be obliged to amend and reform their lives. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of Oyl? shall I give my first-born for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? All this they would willingly do: but all this will not do without real Virtue and Goodness, He hath shewed thee O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

And in the time of our blessed Saviour, those who pretended to be most devout among the *Jews*, were wholly busied about their pretended traditions of *washing of hands*, and the *outsides of their cups and dishes*, and about

about the external and lesser things of  the Law, the Tything of Mint, and Anise, and Cumin and all manner of Herbs, omitting in the mean time the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, and the Love of God, as our Saviour describes their Religion, Matth. 23. 23. Serm. 5.

And after the clear revelation of the Gospel, the best and most perfect institution that ever was, in the very beginning of Christianity, what licentious Doctrines did there creep in, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and releasing men from all moral duties, and the virtues of a good life? by reason whereof the way of truth was evil spoken of, as St. Peter, and St. Jude expressly tell us concerning the Sect of the Gnosticks. And St. John likewise describes the same Sect by their arrogant pretences to extraordinary knowledge and illumination, whilst they walked in darkness, and allowed themselves in all manner of wickedness of life; they pretended to perfection and righteousness, without keeping the Commandments of God.

And


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And in the next following Age of Christianity, how was it pester'd with a trifling controverſie about the time of the obſervation of *Eaſter*, and with endless diſputes and niceties about the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the two Natures and Wills of Chriſt ! by which means the practice of Christianity was greatly neglected, and the main end and deſign of that excellent Religion almoſt quite defeated and loſt.

After this, when *the mystery of iniquity* began to ſhew it ſelf, in the degeneracy of the *Roman Church* from her primitive ſanctity and purity, and in the affectation of an undue and boundleſs power over other Churches, the Chriſtian Religion began to be over-run with Superſtition, and the primitive fervour of piety and devotion was turn'd into a fierce zeal and contention about matters of no moment and importance ; of which we have a moſt remarkable inſtance here in our own Nation, when *Auſtine* the Monk arrived here to convert the Nation, and preach the Goſpel amongſt us,

us, as the Church of *Rome* pretended ; but against all Faith and Truth of History, which assures us that Christianity was planted here among the *Britains* several Ages before, and perhaps sooner than even at *Rome* it self ; and not only so, but had got considerable footing among the *Saxons* before *Austine* the Monk ever set foot amongst us ; I say, when *Austine* the Monk arrived here, the two great points of his Christianity wereto bring the *Britains* to a conformity with the Church of *Rome* in the time of *Easter*, and in the tonsure and shaving of the Priests, after the manner of *St. Peter* as they pretended, upon the Crown of the head , and not of *St. Paul*, which was by shaving or cutting close the hair of the whole Head, as from some vain and foolish tradition he pretended to have learned : The promoting of these two Customs was his great errand and business, and the zeal of his preaching was spent upon these two fundamental points ; in which, after very barbarous and bloody doings , he at last prevailed. And this is *the Conversion of England*, so much boasted of by the Church of *Rome*, and for which this

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Austine is magnified for so great a Saint; when it is very evident from the History of those times, that he was a proud, ignorant, turbulent, and cruel Man, who instead of first converting the Nation to the Faith of Christ, confounded the purity and simplicity of the Christian Religion, which had been planted and establish'd among us long before.

In latter Ages, when *the man of sin* was grown up to his full stature, the great business of Religion was the Pope's absolute and universal Authority over all Christians, even Kings and Princes, *in order to spiritual matters*; Ecclesiastical liberties and immunities; and the exemption of the Clergy, and all matters belonging to them, from the cognizance of the secular Power; the great points which *Tho. a Becket* contended so earnestly for, calling it *the Cause of Christ*, and in the maintenance whereof he persisted to the death, and was canonized as a Saint and a Martyr. And among the People, their Piety consisted in the promoting of Monckery, and founding and endowing Monasteries; in infinite Superstitions, foolish Doctrines, and more
absurd

absurd Miracles to confirm them ; in purchasing Indulgencies with mony, and hearing of Masses for the redemption of Souls out of Purgatory ; in the idolatrous worship of Saints and their Relicks and Images, and especially of the blessed Virgin, which at last grew to that height, as to make up the greatest part of their Worship and Devotion both publick and private. And indeed they have brought matters to that absurd pass, that one may truly say, that the whole business of their Devotion is to teach Men to worship Images, and Images to worship God. For to be present at Divine Service and Prayers celebrated in an unknown tongue, is not the worship of Men and reasonable Creatures, but of Statues and Images, which tho' they be present in the place where this service is performed, yet they bear no part in it, being void of all sense and understanding of what is done. And indeed in their whole Religion, such as it is, they drive so strict a bargain with God, and treat him in so arrogant a manner, by their insolent Doctrine of the merit of good works, as if God were as much be-

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holden to them for their Service and Obedience, as they are to him for the reward of it, which they challenge as of right and justice belonging to them. Nay, so high have they carried this Doctrine, as to pretend not only to merit eternal life for themselves, but to do a great deal more in works of supererogation, for the benefit and advantage of others ; that is, when they have done as much as in strict Duty they are obliged to, and thereby paid down a valuable consideration for Heaven, and as much as in equal justice between God and Man it is worth, the surplusage of their good works they put as a debt upon God, and as so many bills of credit laid up in the Treasury of the Church, which the Pope by his Pardons and Indulgences may dispense and place to whose account he pleaseth. And thus by one device or other they have enervated the Christian Religion to that degree, that it hath quite lost its Virtue and Efficacy upon the Hearts and Lives of men ; and instead of the Fruits of real Goodness and Righteousness, it produceth little else but superstition and folly ; or if it bring forth

forth any Fruits of Charity, it is either so mis-placed upon the Chimera's (as hiring of Priests to say so many Masses for the dead, to redeem their Souls out of Purgatory) that it signifies nothing; or else the Virtue of it is spoil'd by the arrogant pretence of meriting by it. So apt have men always been to deceive themselves by an affected mistake of any thing for Religion, but that which really and in truth is so. And this is that which the Apostle *St. Paul* foretold would be the great miscarriage of *the last times*, that under a great pretence of Religion men should be destitute of all goodness, and abandoned to all wickedness and vice, *Having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power of it*, 2 Tim. 3. 5.

And tho' things have been much better since that happy Reformation from the Corruptions and Errors of Popery, yet even among Protestants the malice and craft of the Devil hath prevailed so far, as to undermine, in a great measure, the necessity of a good life, by those lascious Doctrines of the *Antinomians*, concerning free

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grace, and the justification of a sinner merely upon a confident perswasion of his being in a state of grace and favour with God, and consequently that the Gospel dischargeth men from obedience to the Laws of God, and all manner of obligation to the Virtues of a good life; which Doctrines, how false and absurd soever in themselves, and pernicious in their consequences, did not only prevail very much in *Germany*, a little after the beginning of the Reformation, but have since got too much footing in other places, and been too far entertained and cherish'd by some good men, who were not sufficiently aware of the error and danger of them. But blessed be God, the Doctrine of our Church, both in the *Articles* and *Homilies* of it, hath been preserved pure and free from all error and corruption in this matter on either hand, asserting the necessity of good works, and yet renouncing the merit of them in that arrogant sense, in which the Church of *Rome* does teach and assert it; and so teaching Justification by Faith, and the free Grace of God in Jesus Christ, as to maintain the indispensable

penfable neceffity of the Virtues of a good life.

Serm. 5.

And thus I have done with the *first* Reason, why it is fo fit and neceffary to prefs frequently upon Christians the indifpenfable neceffity of the Virtues of a good Life, *viz.* because men are and have ever been fo very apt to deceive themfelves in this matter, and fo hardly brought to that wherein Religion mainly confifts, *viz.* the Practice of real Goodnefs. I fhall be brief upon the

II. Reason, namely, Because of the indifpenfable neceffity of the thing to render us capable of the Divine Favour and Acceptance, and of the Reward of eternal life. And this added to the former, makes the Reason full and ftrong. For if men be fo apt to deceive themfelves in this matter, and to be deceived in it be a matter of fuch dangerous confequence, then it is highly neceffary to inculcate this frequently upon Christians, that no Man may be miftaken in a matter of fo much danger, and upon which his eternal Happinefs depends. Now if

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Obedience to the Laws of God, and the practice of Virtue and good works be necessary to our continuance in a state of Grace and Favour with God, and to our final Justification by our absolution at the great day, if nothing but Holiness and Obedience can qualify us for the blessed sight of God, and the glorious Reward of eternal Happiness; then it is matter of infinite consequence to us, not to be mistaken in a matter of so great importance; but that we *work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, and give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, by adding to our faith and knowledge, the virtues of a good life; that by patient continuance in well-doing, we seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternal life; and that we so demean our selves in all holy conversation and godliness, as that we may with comfort and confidence wait for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* That this is indispensably necessary to our Happiness, I have in

in my former Discourse shewn at large,  Sermon. 5.
from the great End and Design of Religion in general, and of the Christian Religion in particular, from the whole Design and Doctrine of the Gospel, from the constant tenour of the Bible, and from the Nature and Reason of the thing.

I know it hath been the great design of the Devil and his Instruments, in all Ages, to undermine Religion, by making an unhappy separation and divorce between Godliness and Morality, between Faith and the Virtues of a good life; and by this means not only to weaken and abate, but even wholly to destroy the Force and Efficacy of the Christian Religion, and to leave men as much under the power of the Devil and their Lusts, as if there were no such thing as Christianity in the World. But let us not deceive our selves; This was always Religion, and the condition of our acceptance with God, to endeavour to be like God in Purity and Holiness, in Justice and Righteousness, in mercy and Goodness, *to cease to do evil, and to learn to do well,* And this you will find

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find to be the constant Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, from the beginning of the Bible to the end. Gen. 4. 7. *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?* Psal. 15. 1, 2. *Lord who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell upon thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth from his heart.* Psal. 50. 23. *To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.* Isa. 1. 16, 17, 18. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.* Isa. 3. 10, 11. *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.* Mich. 6. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

And

And our blessed Saviour in his Sermon upon the Mount, tells us plainly what manner of persons we must be, if ever we hope to be happy, and to enter into the Kingdom of God ; and wherein his Religion consists, in Righteousness, and Purity, and Meekness, and Patience, and Peaceableness ; and declares most expressly, that if we hope for Happiness upon any other terms than the Practice of these Virtues, *we build upon the sand. Acts 10. 34. Of a truth I perceive, says St. Peter there, that God is no respecter of Persons ; but in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. Gal. 6. 7. Be not deceived, God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Eph. 5. 6. Let no man deceive you with vain words : for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 2 John 3. 7. Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous.* And here

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here in the Text, *This is a faithful saying, &c. These things are good and profitable to men, acceptable to God, and honourable to Religion, and the only way and means to eternal life, through the Mercy and Merits of Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour.*

S E R-

SERMON VI.

Of the Necessity of Good Works.

The third Sermon on this Text.

TIT. III. 8.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

I Come now to the *Second* thing I proposed, which was to answer an Objection or two, to which the preaching of this kind of Doctrine may seem liable.

First.

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First, That this is to advance and set up Morality.

Secondly, That this seems to contradict St. Paul's Doctrine of *justification by the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, and by faith without the works of the law*. I shall endeavour to answer both these.

First, That this is to advance and set up Morality. To which I answer *two* things.

I. That if by Morality men mean counterfeit Virtue, and the specious shew of Justice, and Charity, and Meekness, or any other Virtue, without the Truth and Reality of them, without an inward Principle of love to God and goodness, out of ostentation and vain-glory, or for some other bye and sinister end, such as probably were the Virtues of many Heathens, and it is to be feared of too many Christians; if this be that which the Objectors mean by Morality, then we do assure them that we preach up no such Morality, but these

those Virtues only which are sincere Serm. 5.
and substantial and real, the Principle
and Root whereof is the love of God
and Goodness, and the End the Ho-
nour and Glory of God, and a ne-
cessary ingredient whereof is Sincerity
and Truth. It is *righteousness and*
true holiness, the sincere love of God
and our Neighbour, real Meekness, and
Patience, and Humility, and Sobriety,
and Chastity, and not the glittering
shew and appearance, the vain and
affected ostentation of any of these
Virtues, which we perswade and press
men so earnestly to endeavour after.

Not that I believe that all Virtues
of the Heathen were counterfeit and
destitute of an inward principle of
Goodness; God forbid that we shou'd
pass so hard a Judgment upon those
excellent men, *Socrates*, and *Epictetus*,
and *Antoninus*, and several others, who
sincerely endeavoured to live up to
the light and law of Nature, and
took so much pains to cultivate and
raise their minds, to govern and sub-
due the irregularity of their sensual
appetites and brutish passions, to pu-
rifie and refine their manners, and to
excel

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excel in all Virtue and Goodness. These were glorious Lights in those dark times, and so much the better for being good under so many disadvantages, as the ignorance and prejudice of their Educations, the multitude of evil Examples continually in their view, and the powerful temptation of the contrary Customs and Fashions of the generality of Mankind.

Nor were they wholly destitute of an inward principle of Goodness: for though they had not that powerful grace and assistance of God's holy Spirit which is promised and afforded to all sincere Christians (as neither had the *Jews*, who were the peculiar people of God, and in covenant with him) yet it is very credible, that such Persons were under a special care and providence of God, and not wholly destitute of Divine assistance, no more than *Job* and his Friends, mentioned in the old Testament, and *Cornelius* in the new, who surely were very good men, and accepted of God, tho' they were *Gentiles*, and *Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel*, and *Strangers from the Covenant of promise*; but yet
no

not excluded from the Blessing of the *Messias*, tho' they were ignorant of him, as many of the *Jews* likewise were, nor from the Benefit of that great Propitiation, which *in the fulness of time* he was to make for the sins of the whole World. Serm. 6.

So that there is no need so uncharitably to conclude (as some of the Ancients have done, not all, nor the most ancient of them neither) that there were no good men among the Heathen, and that the brightest of their Virtues were counterfeit, and only in shew and appearance. For there might be several good men among the Gentiles, in the same condition that *Cornelius* was before he became a Christian; of whom it is said, whilst he was yet a Gentile, that *he was a devout man, and feared God, and that his prayer and his alms were accepted of God*, a certain sign that they were not counterfeit. And if he had died in that condition, before Christ had been revealed to him, I do not see what reasonable cause of doubt there can be concerning his Salvation; and yet it is a most certain and inviolable

M truth,

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truth, that *there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus; neither is there salvation in any other.* And good men in all Ages and Nations from the beginning of the World, both before the Law, and under the Law, and without the Law, such as *feared God, and wrought Righteousness*, were accepted of him *in that name*, and by the Meritorious Sacrifice of *that Lamb of God*, which in respect of the Virtue and Efficacy of it, is said to have been *slain from the foundation of the world.*

II. But if by moral Virtues be meant those which concern the manners of men, from whence they seem to have taken their name, and which are in truth the Duties commanded and enjoined by the natural or moral Law, and are comprehended under those two *great commands*, (as our blessed Saviour calls them) *the love of God, and our neighbour*; I say, if this be the meaning of it, then we do advance this kind of Morality, as that which is the primary and substantial part of all Religion, and most strictly enjoyn-
ed

ed by the Christian. To which purpose our Saviour tells us, *Matt. 5. 17. That he was not come to destroy the law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them.* And ver. 19. *Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least of these Commandments, and teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven;* that is, under the Dispensation of the Gospel. So that this is a principal part of the Christian Religion, to teach and practice the Duties of the moral Law. This the Pharisees were defective in, placing their Religion in external and little things, but neglecting the great Duties of Morality, *the weightier matters of the law, mercy, and judgment, and fidelity, and the love of God.* And therefore he adds, ver. 20. *I say unto you, except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* It is not possible in more express and emphatical words to enjoin the observations of the Duties of the Moral Law. And then for that great Principle and Rule

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of moral Justice, *to do to all men, as we would have them to do to us.* Our Saviour enjoins it as an essential part of Religion, and the sum and substance of our whole Duty to our Neighbour, and of all the particular Precepts contained in the Law and the Prophets, *Matt. 7. 12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the Prophets.* And St. Paul most expressly declares, that he was so far from weakning or *making void* the obligation of *the law* by his Doctrine of *justification by Faith*, that he did thereby confirm and *establish it*, *Rom. 3. 31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea we establish the law.*

So that moral Duties and Virtues are the same with Christian Graces, and with that Holiness and Righteousness which the Gospel requires, and differ only in name and notion. They are called *Virtues*, with relation to the intrinsical Nature and Goodness of them, and *Graces*, with respect to the Principle from which they flow, being the Fruits and Effects

fects of the gracious Operation of the Spirit of God upon our Minds. And it hath been a very ill service to Religion to decry Morality, as some have done, not considering that Moral Duties are of primary obligation, and bound upon us by the Law of Nature ; and that Christianity hath reinforced and seconded the obligation of them by more powerful Motives and Encouragements. But I proceed to the

Serm. 6.

Second Objection, viz. That this Discourse seems to be contrary to St. Paul's Doctrine of justification by the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, by faith, without the works of the Law.

To which I answer, That St. Paul, when he does so vehemently and frequently assert *justification by the free grace of God, and by faith, without the works of the law*, does not thereby exclude the necessity of works of Righteousness and Obedience to the moral Precepts of the Gospel, as the condition of our continuance in the favour of God, and of our final and perfect

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fect Justification and Absolution by the sentence of the great day ; but on the contrary, does every where declare the necessity of a Holy and Virtuous life to this purpose. And this is most plainly the tenour and current of his Doctrine throughout all his Epistles. But whenever he contends that *we are justified by faith without works*, he denies one of these three things.

1. That the Observation of the Law of *Moses* is necessary to our Justification and Salvation. And this he does in opposition to those who troubled the Christian Church, by teaching, that it was still necessary to Christians to keep the Law of *Moses* ; and that unless they did so, they could not be saved ; of which we have a full account given, *Acts* 15. And this for the most part is the meaning of that assertion, so frequent in his Epistles to the *Romans*, and the *Galatians*, that *we are not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ*. And this is very evident from the tenour of his reasoning about this matter, in which he does so frequently

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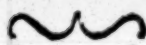
ly urge this Argument, and insist so strongly upon it. viz. That men were justified before the Law of Moses was given, for which he instances in *Abraham*, and therefore the observance of that Law cannot be necessary to a Man's Justification and Salvation. Serm. 6.

2. Sometimes he, in his Discourse upon this Argument, denies the merit of any works of Obedience and Righteousness to gain the Favour and Acceptance of God ; so that we cannot challenge any thing of God as *of debt*, and as *a ground of boasting*, but we owe all to the free Grace and Mercy of God ; and when we have done our best, have done but our Duty. And this he likewise frequently insists upon in his Epistles to the *Romans*, in opposition to an arrogant opinion, common among the *Jews*, of the merit of good works, and that God was indebted to them for their obedience. In this sense he says, *Rom. 4. 4. Now to him that worketh is the reward reckoned, not of grace but of debt ;* that is, he that claims justification, and the reward of eternal life, as due to him for his Obedience, does not ascribe

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it to the free Grace of God, but challengeth it as a debt due to him.

3. Sometimes he denies the necessity of any works of Righteousness, antecedently to our first Justification, and being received into a state of Grace and Favour with God; and asserts on the contrary, that by the Faith of Christ, and sincerely embracing the Christian Religion, men are justified, and tho' they were never so great sinners before, all their past sins are forgiven, and God is perfectly reconciled to them. In which sense he says, *Chap. 4. 5. That God justifies the ungodly upon their believing.* So that whatever sins they were guilty of before, and tho' they never did any one good action in their lives, yet if they sincerely embrace the Christian Religion, and thereby engage themselves to reform their lives, and to obey the Precepts of the Gospel for the future, God will thereupon receive them into his favour, and pardon the sins of their former lives. And in this Epistle to *Titus, Chap. 3. 5. 7.* immediately before the Text, *Not by works of righteousness which we have*

have done, but according to his mercy he 
saved us, by the washing of regeneration, Serm. 6.
and by the renewing of the holy Ghost :
that being justified by his grace. we should
be made heirs according to the hope of
eternal life ; that is, tho' their for-
mer life had been very bad, (as he
describes it before, ver. 3. For we our
selves were sometimes foolish, disobedi-
ent, serving divers lusts and pleasures,
living in malice, and envy, and hatred of
one another) I say, notwithstanding
this, tho' they had done no works of
Righteousness, but the contrary, yet
upon their solemn Profession of Chri-
stianity at their Baptism, and Decla-
ration of their Repentance, and en-
gagements to live better, they were
justified freely by God's grace, and saved
by his mercy. But then he does not
say, that after this solemn Profession
of Christianity works of Righteous-
ness were not necessary, to continue
them in this state of Grace and Favour
with God, but quite contrary, he
plainly declares the necessity of them
in the very next words ; *This is a
faithful saying, &c.*

And

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And the consideration of this will fully reconcile the seeming difference between St. *Paul* and St. *James*, in this matter of Justification. St. *Paul* affirms that a sinner is at first justified, and received into the favour of God, by a sincere Profession of the Christian Faith, without any works of Righteousness preceeding. St. *James* affirms, that no Man continues in a justified state, and in favour with God, whose Faith doth not bring forth good works, and that it is not a true and lively Faith which doth not approve and shew it self to be so, by the works of Obedience and a good life. *James* 2. 14. *What doth it profit a man. my brethren, if a man say that he hath faith, and hath not works ; can faith save him ?* And ver. 17. *Faith if it have not works is dead, being alone.* And ver. 20. he repeats it again, *Know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead.* And ver. 22. speaking of *Abraham*, *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect.* And ver. 26. *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* The sum and result of all

all which is this, that tho' we be justified at first by Faith without works preceeding, yet Faith without good works following it will not finally justifie and save us; nay indeed, that Faith which does not bring forth the Fruits of a good life, was never a true, and living, and perfect Faith; but pretended, and dead, and imperfect, and therefore can justifie no man; and he that hath only such a Faith does but make an empty and ineffectual Profession, but is really destitute of the true Faith of the Gospel.

And this is agreeable to that explication which was given by our first Reformers here in *England*, of the nature of *justifying faith*, "That
 " it is not a meer perswasion of the
 " truths of natural and revealed Reli-
 " gion, but such a belief as begets a
 " submission to the Will of God, and
 " hath Hope, Love, and Obedience
 " to God's Commandments joyned
 " to it. That this is the Faith which
 " in Baptism is professed, from which
 " Christians are called *the faithful*;
 " and that it those Scriptures, where
 it

Vol. XI. "it is said, *we are justified by Faith,*
 "we may not think that we be justifi-
 "fied by Faith, as it is a separate Vir-
 "tue from Hope and Charity, the fear
 "of God and Repentance ; but by it
 "is meant Faith, neither only nor
 "alone, but with the foresaid Vir-
 "tues, containing an engagement of
 "obedience to the whole Doctrine
 "and Religion of Christ. And that
 "altho' all that are justified, must of
 "necessity have Charity, as well
 "as Faith, yet neither Faith nor
 "Charity are the worthiness and me-
 "rit of our justification, but that is
 "to be ascribed only to our Savi-
 "our Christ, who was *offered upon the*
 "*cross for our sins, and rose again for*
 "*our justification* ; as may be seen
 more at large in a Treatise publish'd
 at the beginning of our Reformation,
 upon this and some other points.
 And I do not see what can be said up-
 on this point with more clearness and
 weight.

All the Application I shall make
 of this Discourse, shall be briefly
 this ; That if we be convinced of the
 necessity of the Virtues of a good
 life

life to all that profess themselves Christians, we would seriously and in good earnest set about the practice of them : If *this be a faithful saying*, then I am sure it greatly concerns us to be careful of our lives and actions, and that *our conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ*; because if this be true, there is no possible way to reconcile a wicked life, no, nor a wilful neglect and violation of any of the Duties and Laws of Christianity, with the hopes of Heaven and Eternal Life. In this the Scripture is positive and peremptory, that *every man that hath this hope in him, must purifie himself, even as he is pure* : that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord* : But if we have our fruit unto holiness, our end shall be everlasting life.

And here I might particularly recommend to your careful practice, the great Virtues of Christianity ; those which St. Paul tells us are the proper and genuine fruits of the spirit of Christ, *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meek-*
ness,

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ness, temperance. But I have not time to insist particularly upon them. I shall content my self briefly to mention those Duties, which the Apostle in this Epistle doth more especially press upon the several conditions and relations of men. Those who are teachers and instructors of others, that they would not only be careful to preach sound Doctrine, but in all things to shew themselves patterns of good works. Those who are subject to others, and under their Government, that they would pay all Duty and Obedience to their superiours, as *Children* to their *Parents*, *Servants* to their *Masters*, that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, as the Apostle speaks, Chap. 2. ver. 10. And so likewise those who are *Subjects*, that they live in all Peaceable and Humble Obedience to *Princes* and *Magistrates*. This our Apostle speaks of as a great Duty of Christian Religion, and reckons it among good works, Chap. 3. 1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers,

ers, and to obey Magistrates, and to be ready to every good work. Serm.6.

And then those who are of an inferiour condition, that they labour and be diligent in the work of an honest calling, for this is privately good and profitable unto men, and to their families ; and those who are above this necessity, and are in a better capacity, to maintain good works properly so called, works of Piety, and Charity, and Justice ; that they be careful to promote and advance them, according to their Power and Opportunity, because these things are publicly good and beneficial to mankind. And besides this, (as St. Peter exhorts, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, &c.) And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge

 knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 Vol. XI. But he that lacketh these things is
 blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath
 forgotten that he was purged from his
 old sins; that is, doth not consider
 that the design of Christianity is to
 renew and reform the hearts and lives
 of men. Wherefore the rather, brethren,
 as he goes on, give diligence to make your
 calling and election sure: for if ye do
 these things, ye shall never fall. For so
 an entrance shall be ministred unto you
 abundantly, into the everlasting King-
 dom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
 Christ.

I will conclude all with that excel-
 lent saying of St. Paul in this Epi-
 stle to *Titus*, which so fully declares
 to us the great design, and the pro-
 per Efficacy of the Christian Doctrine
 upon the minds and manners of men;
Chap. 2. 11, 12, 13. For the grace of
 God that bringeth salvation, hath ap-
 peared to all men, teaching us, that
 denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts,
 we should live soberly, righteously, and
 godly in this present world: Looking
 for that blessed hope, and the glo-
 rious

to a good life.

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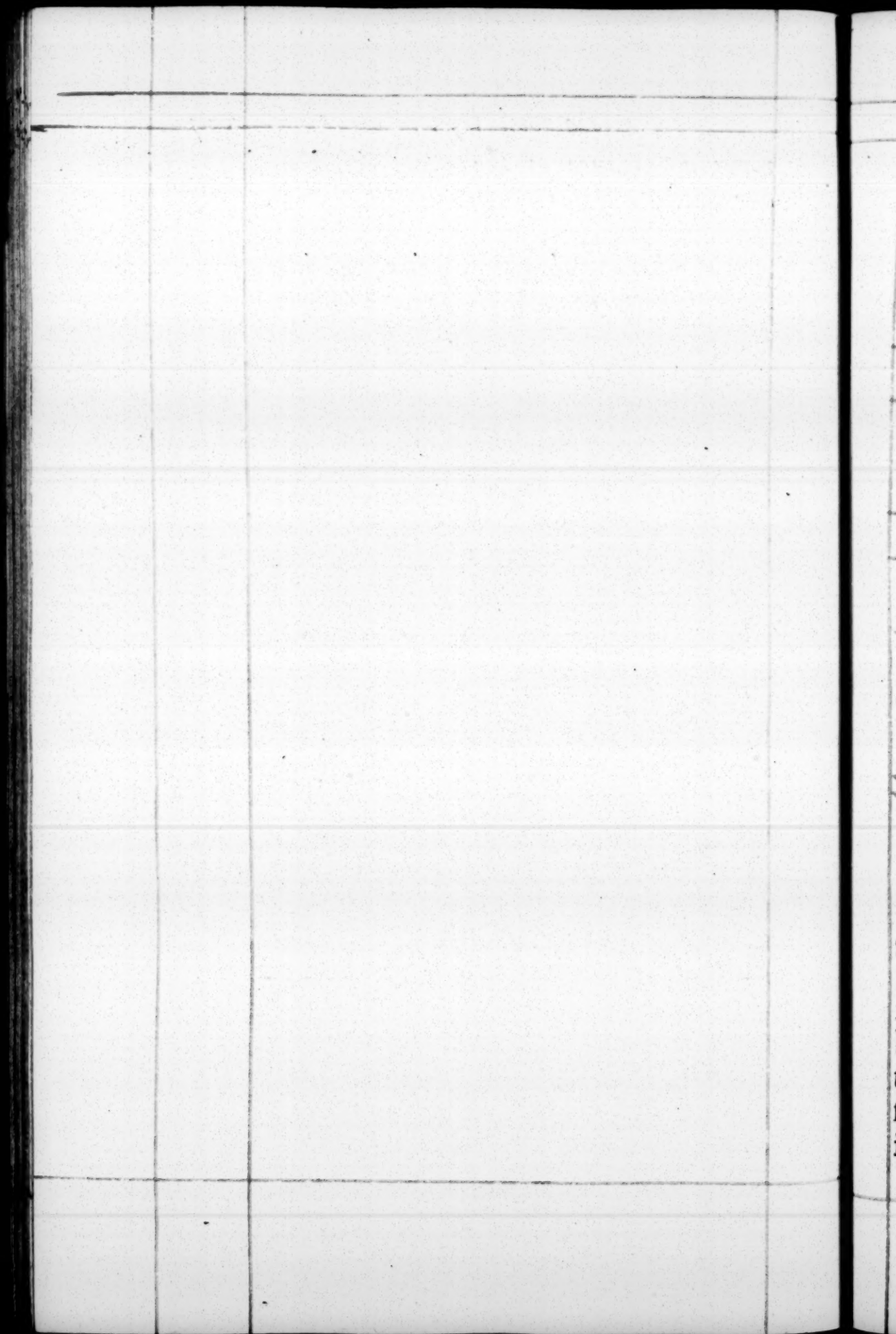
*rious appearance of the great God and
our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Serim.6.

*To whom with the Father, and the
Holy Ghost, be all Glory and Honour
now and for ever. Amen.*

N

S E R



SERMON VII.

Of doing all to the Glory
of God.

I COR. X. 31.

*Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or
whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory
of God.*

THESE Words are a general conclusion inferr'd from a particular case, which the Apostle had been discoursing of before; and that we may the better understand the meaning of this general Rule, it will not be amiss to look back a little upon the particular case the Apostle was speaking of; and that was concerning *the partaking of things offer'd to*
N 2
Idols;

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Idols, and that in two cases ; either by partaking of the Idol-feasts in their Temples, after the Sacrifices ; or by partaking of things offer'd to Idols, whether they were bought by Christians in the Market, or set before them at a private Entertainment, to which by some Heathens they were invited.

The first he condemns as absolutely unlawful : the other not as unlawful in it self, but in some circumstances upon the account of scandal.

The first case he speaks of from *ver. 14. to the 23. Wherefore, my beloved brethen, flee from idolatry. I speak to wise men : judge what I say.* As if he had said, you may easily apprehend what it is I am going to caution you against. And first he tells them in general, that they who communicated in the worship of any Deity, or in any kind of Sacrifice offer'd to him, did, in so doing, own and acknowledge that for a Deity. To this purpose he instanceth in communicating in the Christian Sacrament, and in the *Jewish* Sacrifices,
ver.

ver. 16. 17, 18. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh; (that is, the Jews) are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar? Thus it is in the Christian, and the Jewish Worship. And the case is the same, if any Man partake of the Idol-feasts in their Temples. This he does not express, but takes it for granted they understood what this Discourse aimed at.*

Serm. 7.

And then he answers an Argument, which it seems was made use of by some, particularly the *Gnosticks*, of whom the Apostle speaks, *Chap. 8.* and that was this. If an Idol be nothing, and consequently things sacrificed to Idols were not to be considered as Sacrifices, then it was lawful to partake of the Idol-feasts, which were celebrated in their Temples. And that the Apostle speaks of these, is plain from his Discourse against the *Gnosticks*,

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who made use of this Argument for the lawfulness of communicating at the Idol feasts, *Chap. 8. ver. 4. As concerning therefore the eating of things which are offer'd in sacrifice unto Idols ; we know that an Idol is nothing in the world, &c. And ver. 10. If any man see thee which hast knowledge (alluding to the very name of Gnosticks) if any man see thee which hast knowledge, sit at meat in an Idol temple.*

This then is that partaking of Idol-feasts, which the Apostle here speaks of, which they pretended to be lawful, because *an Idol is nothing*. This, says the Apostle, I know as well as you, that an Idol is no real Deity, but for all that the Devil is really worship'd and serv'd by this means, *ver. 20. But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils, and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with Devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of Devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of Devils.*

Having declared this way of partaking

taking of things offer'd to Idols to be unlawful in it self, and a virtual renouncing of Christianity; then he proceeds to the consideration of the other case, of eating of things offer'd to Idols out of their Temples, which might happen several ways. Sometimes being sold by the Priests, they were expos'd to sale in the Market. Sometimes the Heathens carried some remainders of the Sacrifices to their Houses, and inviting the Christians to a Feast, might set these Meats before them; What should Christians do in either of these cases?

Serm.7.

First, He determines in general, that out of the Temples it was lawful to eat these things, because in so doing they communicated in no act of worship with the Heathens; it is lawful, he says, in it self; but because it might be harmful to others, and give scandal, in such circumstances it became unlawful by accident. *Ver. 23.*

All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edifie not. Things which are lawful in themselves, may in some cases be very dangerous and

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destructive to others, and we should not only consider our selves, but others also. *Let no man seek his own: but every man anothers welfare.* And then he comes to the particular cases. *Whatever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.* We may take these things from God's hand, who is the true Lord of them and of all Creatures. For this reason we may without scrupulous enquiry, use those meats which are publickly exposed to sale.

And so likewise in the other case, if we be invited to the Table of a Heathen, we may eat what is set before us, without enquiring whether it be part of an Idol-sacrifice. But if any Man tell us, that this Meat was offer'd in Sacrifice to Idols, in that case we ought to abstain from eating of it, *for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake*; that is, out of regard to the opinion of those, who think these meats unlawful: *for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.* Also in another sense, God hath

hath made such abundant provision for us, that we may abstain from this or that Meat without any great inconvenience. *Conscience, I say, not thine own but anothers.* He had said before, we should eat of what was set before us, asking no question for conscience sake; that is not making it a matter of conscience to our selves: now he says, if we be told it was offer'd to an Idol, we should not eat for conscience sake; that is, not as making a matter of Conscience of it to our selves, but out of regard to the Conscience of another, to whom it might be a scandal. *For why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? and if I with thanksgivings be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?* that is, Why should another Man's Conscience be a prejudice to my liberty? If another makes Conscience of it as unlawful, why should his Conscience govern mine, and make me think so too; or why should I be evil spoken of, for thinking it lawful to eat any thing set before me, for which I give thanks? This is a little obscure; but the plain meaning of the Apostle's reasoning seems to be this;

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this. Tho' I have that regard to another Man's weak Conscience, as to abstain from eating what he thinks unlawful; yet am I not therefore bound to be of his opinion, and think it unlawful in it self; I will consider his weakness so far as to forbear that which I am perswaded is lawful to do, but yet I will still perserve the liberty of my own judgment; and as I am content to give no scandal to him, so I expect that he should not censure and condemn me for thinking that lawful. which he believes not to be so: And then from all this Discourse, the Apostle establisheth this general Rule in the Text, *Wherefore whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* To which is parallel that other Text, *1 Pet. 4. 11. That God in all things may be glorified.* So that this general Rule lays a Duty upon all Christians of designing the glory of God in all their actions; all the difficulty is, what is here meant by this, of *doing all things to the Glory of God.* The Jews have a common saying, which seems to be parallel with this phrase of the Apostle, *That all things should be*

be done in the name of God. And this they make so essential to every good action, that it was a received Principle among them, that he who obeys any Command of God, and not *in his name*, shall receive no reward. Now that to do things *in the name of God*, and to do them *to his glory*, are but several Phrases signifying the same thing, is evident from that Precept of the Apostle, Col. 3. 17. *And whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, to his glory.* Now for our clear understanding of the sense of this phrase of *glorifying God*, or *doing things to God's Glory*; we will consider the various use of it in Scripture, and so descend to the proper and particular sense of it here in the Text.

The glory of God is nothing else but the honour which is given to him by his Creatures; and consequently, the general notion of *glorifying God*, or *doing any thing to his glory*, is to design to honour God by such and such actions; and this phrase is in Scripture

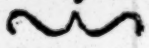
~ pture more especially apply'd to these
Vol. XI. following particulars.

I. We are said in Scripture to glorifie God by a solemn acknowledgment of him and his Perfections, of his Goodness, and Mercy, of his Power and Wisdom, of his Truth and Faithfulness, of his Sovereign Dominion and Authority over us. Hence it is that all solemn actions of Religion are called the Worship of God, which is given to him by his Creatures, signified by some outward expression of reverence and respect. Thus we are said to worship God, when we fall down before him, and pray to him for Mercy and Blessings, or praise him for Favours and Benefits received from him, or perform any other solemn act of Religion. *Psal. 86. 9. All nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorifie thy name.*

But especially the Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving is most frequently in Scripture called *glorifying of God, or giving glory to him.* *Psal. 86. 14.*
I

to glorifie God.

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I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorifie thy name.  Sermon. 7.

Matt. 5. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your father which is in heaven ; that is, praise him upon that account. Luke 5. 25. it is said of the Man sick of the Palsie, that when he was healed, He departed to his own house, glorifying God ; that is, praising God for his great mercy to him. And Luke 17. 18. our Saviour speaking of the ten lepers that were healed, says, that but one of them returned to give glory to God ; that is, to return thanks to God for his recovery.

II. Men are said in Scripture to give glory to God by the acknowledgment of their Sins, and Repentance for them. Josh. 7. 19. And Joshua said to Achan, My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to him. In like manner the Prophet Jeremiah exhorting the people to Repentance, useth this expression, Jer. 13. 16. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble
upon

Vol. XI. *upon the dark Mountains.* And Rev. 16. 9. it is said, that those upon whom great Plagues fell, *Repented not to give God glory.* We glorifie God by confessions of our Sins and Repentance, because in so doing we acknowledge his Authority, and the Holiness of those Righteous Laws which we have broken.

III. We are said likewise in Scripture, to glorifie God by our Holiness and Obedience. Thus we are commanded *to glorifie God* by the Chastity of our Bodies, and the Purity of our Minds, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *Glorifie God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his.* Thus our Saviour is said to have glorified God in the World, by his perfect Obedience to his Will, John 17. 4. *Father I have glorified thee upon earth.* And thus he tells us we may glorifie God, by the Fruits of Holiness and Obedience in our lives, John 15. 8. *Herein is my father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.* So likewise St. Paul prays for the Philippians, that they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which
are

to the glory of God.

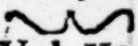
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are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

Serm. 7.

IV. We are said likewise in an especial manner, *to glorifie God* by our sufferings for his Cause and Truth. *John. 21. 19.* our Saviour foretelling St. Peter's Martyrdom, expresseth it by this phraise of gloryfying God by his Death, *This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorifie God.*

V. and *Lastly*, And because Religion is the solemn honour, and publick owning and acknowledgment of the Deity : Hence it is that in Scripture we are said *to glorifie God* in a peculiar and eminent manner, when in all our actions we consult the honour and advantage of Religion. Upon this account St. Peter exhorts the Ministers of the Gospel, so to Preach to the People, and so to perform the publick Offices of Religion, as may be for the honour of Religion ; and this he calls gloryfying of God, *1. Pet. 4. 11. If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God ; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth,*


 Vol. XI. *giveth ; that God in all things may be glorified.* And because the Peace and Unity of Christians is so very much for the honour and advantage of Religion, therefore we are said in an especial manner to glorifie God, by maintaining the Peace and Unity of the Church, *Rom. 15. 5, 6. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another, that ye may with one mind, and one mouth glorifie God, even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And here in the Text, we are said *to do all things to the glory of God*, when in all our actions we have a regard to the promoting and advancing of Religion, and the Edification of Christians. For here by *eating and drinking to the glory of God*, the Apostle plainly means, that when things offer'd to Idols are set before us, we should refrain from them, when by our eating, the interest of Religion, and the edification of Christians may receive any prejudice ; that is, when our eating may be a scandal to others, that is, a stumbling block, or an occasion of falling into sin. And that this is the Apostle's

stle's meaning, is evident from ver. 23. *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient, & πάντα σπουδαία, all things profit not; all things are lawful for me, but all things edifie not; that is, tho' I know it is a thing very lawful in it self, to eat things which have been offered to Idols, if they be bought in the Market, or accidentally set before me at a Feast; yet in some circumstances it may not be for the advantage of Religion, and be so far from edifying, that it may be an occasion of sin to them. For instance; I am invited to a Feast, where things offer'd to Idols are set before me, and one says, *this was offer'd in sacrifice unto Idols*, a sufficient intimation to me that he thinks it unlawful; and therefore I will forbear, because of the inconvenience to Religion, and the manifold scandal that might follow upon it, by hindring others from embracing Religion; or by tempting weak Christians, either to the doing of a thing against their Conscience, or to Apostatize from Religion. In this case, he that abstains from these Meats, and*

Serm. 7.

contents himself with others, *eats to the glory of God.*

And that this is the true notion of *scandal* and *offence*, not barely to *grieve others*, or do things *displeasing* to them, but to do such things as are really *hurtful* to others, and may be a *prejudice* or *hindrance* to their *salvation*, and an *occasion* of their *falling into sin*: I say, that this is the true and proper notion of *scandal*, is evident from what follows immediately after the Text; *Give none offence to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God; as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Give no offence to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God*; the Apostle intimates that such an action as this we are speaking of, might be an *occasion of sin* to all these, and a *hindrance of their salvation*: It might hinder the *Jew* from turning *Christian*, and harden him in his *infidelity*; for he might say, see how well you *Christians* *Worship* one *God*, when you can partake of things offer'd to *Idols*: It might confirm the *Heathen*

Heathen in his superstition, and keep him from embracing Christianity; for he might say surely, Why should the Christians perswade me to forsake the Worship of Idols, when they themselves will knowingly eat things offer'd to them? It might tempt the weak Christians either to sin against their Consciences by following my example, or to Apostatize from Christianity upon this offence taken against it; therefore says the Apostle, *do all things to the glory of God*; that is, for the Honour and Advantage of the Christian Religion, and the furtherance of mens Salvation; for so says he, *I do in these, and all other actions of my life, I study the advantage of all men, in all things, not regarding mine own convenience in comparison of the eternal Salvation of others.*

And thus I have as briefly and clearly as I could explain'd this phrase to you, of *doing things to the glory of God.*

The result of all is, that we *glorifie God* by our doing our Duty, by all
O 2 actions

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actions of Worship and Obedience to God, and by our Repentance in case of sin and disobedience, by doing and by suffering the Will of God, more especially by using our Christian liberty, as to things lawful in themselves, so as may make most for the Honour and Advantage of Religion, for the Unity and Edification of the Church, and the Salvation of the Souls of men, which is the proper notion here in the Text, *of eating and drinking, and doing whatever we do, to the glory of God.*

From all this Discourse it will be evident, that *three* things must concur, that our actions may be said to be done *to the glory of God.*

1. Our actions must be materially good ; we must do what God commands, and abstain from doing what he hath forbidden. Sin is in its nature a dishonour to God, a contradiction to his Nature, and a contempt of his Authority and Laws ; so that we cannot glorifie God by transgressing our Duty.

2. Our

2. Our Actions must not only be good, but they must be done with regard to God, and out of Conscience of our Duty to him, and in hopes of the reward which he hath promised, and not for any low, and mean, and temporal end. The best action in it self may be spoil'd, and all the Virtue of it blasted, by being done for a wrong end. If we serve God to please men, and be charitable out of vain-glory, *to be seen of men*; if we profess Godliness for gain, and are religious only to serve our temporal interest, tho' the actions we do be never so good, yet all the Virtue and Reward of them is lost, by the mean End and Design which we aim at in the doing of them; because all this while we have no love or regard for God, and the Authority of his Laws: we make no Conscience of our Duty to him, we are not moved by the Rewards of another World, which may lawfully work upon us, and prevail with us, but we are swayed by little temporal Advantages, which if we could obtain as well by doing the

Q 3 contrary,

Vol.XI. contrary, we would as soon, nay perhaps much sooner do it.

And this is so essentially necessary, that no action, tho' never so good, that is not done with regard to God, and upon some of the proper Motives and Considerations of Religion, such as are the Authority of God, Conscience of our Duty to him, Love of him, Faith in his Promises, Fear of his Displeasure; I say, no action that is not done upon all, or some of these Motives, can be said to be done *to the glory of God*. And this is the meaning of that saying among the *Jews*, which I mention'd before, *That he who obeys any command of God, but not in his name, shall receive no reward*. Moral actions receive their denomination of good or evil, as well from the end, as from the matter of them; and as the best end cannot sanctifie an action bad in it self; so a bad end and design is enough to spoil the best action we can do; and as it is great impiety to do a wicked thing, tho' for a Religious end, so it is great Hypocrisie to be Religious for mean and temporal ends.

3. That

3. That all our actions may be done *to the glory of God*, we must not only take care that they be lawful in themselves, but that they be not spoil'd and vitiated by any bad circumstance; for circumstances alter moral actions, and may render that which is lawful in it self, unlawful in some cases: So that if we would *do all things to the glory of God*, we must in some cases refrain from doing that which is lawful in it self. As when such an action that I am about to do, may through the prejudice or mistake of men, probably redound to the dishonour and disadvantage of Religion, by causing factions and divisions, by hindring some from embracing the true Religion; or making others Apostatize from it, or by being any other way an occasion to men of falling into sin, or any impediment to their Salvation; in these and the like cases, we are bound to have that consideration of Religion, that regard to the Peace and Unity of the Church, that Tenderness and Charity for the Souls of men, as to deny our selves the use of things otherwise lawful; and if

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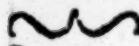
we do not do it, we offend against a great Rule both of Piety and Charity.

I shall only father at present, endeavour to give a brief resolution to *two* questions, much debated upon occasion of this Rule of the Apostles, of *doing all things to the glory of God.*

First, How far we are bound actually to intend and design the glory of God in every particular action of our lives. To this I answer,

1. That it is morality impossible that a Man should do every particular action with actual and explicit thoughts and intentions of glorifying God thereby, and therefore there can be no obligation to any such thing.

2. It is not necessary, no more than for a Man that takes a journey, every step of his way actually to think of his Journey's end, and the place whither he intends to go; a constant resolution to go to such a place, and a
due

due care not to go out of the way ; 
and in case of any doubt, to inform Serm.7.
our selves as well as we can of the
right way, and to keep in it, is
as much consideration of the end
of a Man's Journey, as is needful to
bring him thither, and more than this
would be troublesome and to no pur-
pose ; the case is the very same in
the course of a Man's Life. From
whence it follows in the

3. Place, That an habitual and set-
tled intention of mind, to glorifie
God in the course of our Lives is suffi-
cient, because this will serve all good
purposes, as well as an actual intenti-
on upon every particular occasion.
He that doth things with regard to
God, and out of Conscience of his
Duty to him, and upon the proper
Motives and Considerations of Reli-
gion, in Obedience and Love to God,
in hopes of his Reward, and out of
fear of his Displeasure, glorifies God
in his Actions, And if this Principle
be but rooted and settled in his mind,
it is sufficient to govern his Life, and
is virtually, and to all purposes as true
and

and constant an intention of glorifying God, as if we did actually and explicitly propound this end to our selves in every particular action of our lives.

Secondly, Whether a Man be bound to prefer the glory of God before his own eternal Happiness, as *Moses* and *St. Paul* seem to have done ; the one in being content to have *his name blotted out of the book of life*, the other to be *Anathema from Christ, for the Salvation of Israel* ? To this I answer.

If we could admit the supposition, that the glory of God, and a Man's eternal Happiness might come in competition, there could be no obligation upon a Man to chuse eternal misery upon any consideration whatsoever. The preference of one thing before another, supposeth them both to be Objects of our choice ; but the greatest evil known and apprehended to be so, cannot be the object of a reasonable choice ; neither the greatest moral nor natural evil of sin, or misery. Sin is not to be chosen in any case, no not for the glory of God. The
Apostle

before our own eternal Happiness.

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Apostle makes the supposition, and answers it ; that *if the truth and glory of God could be promoted by his lie,* yet we are *not to do evil that good may come,* Rom. 3. 7, 8. Serm. 7.

Nor is the greatest natural evil the object of our choice. God himself hath planted a Principle in our Nature to the contrary, to seek our own Happiness, and to avoid utter ruin and destruction ; and then surely much more that which is much worse, as eternal misery is, whatever some learned men, in despite of Nature and common Sense, have asserted to the contrary, that it is better and more desirable to be extremely and eternally miserable, than not to Be ; for what is there desirable in Being, when it serves to no other purpose but to be the foundation of endless and intolerable Misery. And if this be a Principle of our Nature, can any Man imagine that God should frame us so, as to make the first and fundamental Principle of it directly opposite to our Duty ?

As

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As to the instance of *Moses*, it does not reach this case; because the phrase of *blotting out of the book of life*, does in all probability signifie no more than *a temporal death*. As to that of *St. Paul*, it is by no means to be taken in a strict sense, but as a vehement and hyperbolical expression of his mighty affection to his *brethren according to the flesh*, For whom, says he, *I could wish to be an Anathema from Christ*. Besides the reason of the thing, the form of the expression shews the meaning of it, *I could wish*, that is, I would be content to do or suffer almost any thing for their Salvation, insomuch that *I could wish*, if it were fit and lawful, and reasonable to make such a wish, *to be accursed from Christ for their sakes*. It is plainly a suspended form of speech, which declares nothing absolutely. But,

2. It is a vain and senseless supposition, that the glory of God, and our eternal Happiness can stand in competition. By seeking the glory God, we naturally and directly promote our own Happiness; the glory
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of God and our Happiness, are inseparably link'd together ; we cannot glorifie God by sin ; and so gracious hath God been to us, that he hath made those things to be our Duty, which naturally tend to our felicity ; and we cannot glorifie God more than by doing our Duty, nor can we promote our own Happiness more effectually than by the same way. From whence it plainly follows that the glory of God and our Happiness, cannot reasonably be supposed to cross and contradict one another ; and therefore the question is frivolous which supposeth they may come in competition. 1 Cor. 15. 58. the Apostle exhorts Christians to be *Stedfast and unmoveable, and abundant in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* And Tit. 1. 1, 2. the Apostle calls himself, *A servant of Jesus Christ, in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.* To serve God in hope of eternal life, is to glorifie God, and therefore the glory of God, and our eternal Happiness are never to be opposed.

I shall


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I shall briefly draw *two or three* Inferences from this Discourse, and so conclude.

I. See here the great goodness of God to Mankind, who is pleased to esteem whatever is for the good of men, to be for the glory of God; and whatever tends to the eternal Salvation of our selves, or others, to be a glorifying of himself.

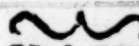
II. We learn hence likewise, the excellency of the Christian Religion, which requires not only a conscientious care of our selves, to do nothing but what is lawful; but likewise a charitable regard to others in the use of our liberty, in the doing or not doing of those things which we may lawfully do; after the securing of our own Happiness by doing our Duty, we are to consult the Edification and Salvation of others, in the charitable use of our liberty in those things which God hath left indifferent.

III. Here is a great Argument to us to be very careful of our Duty, and
to

to abound in the fruits of Holiness, because hereby we glorifie God. *Here in is my father glorified*, says our Saviour, *if ye bring forth much fruit*; and the Apostle tells us, that *the fruits of Righteousness are to the praise and glory of God*. We having all from God, our very Being, our Souls and Bodies and the Powers and Faculties of both, and therefore we should give him the glory of his own gifts: our Souls and Bodies were not only made by him at first, but are likewise redeemed by him, and *bought with a Price*, and therefore, as the Apostle argues, *we should glorifie him in our bodies, and in our Souls, which are his*.

Serm. 7.

IV. and *lastly*, We should in all our actions have a particular regard to the Honour and Advantage of Religion, the Edification of our Brethren, and the Peace and Unity of the Church, because in these things we do in a peculiar manner glorifie God. In vain do men pretend to seek the glory of God by faction and division, which do in their own Nature so immediately tend to the dishonour and damage of Religion. Next to the wicked

Vol. XI.  ed lives of men, nothing is so great a disparagement and weakning to Religion, as the divisions of Christians; and therefore instead of imploying our zeal about differences, we should be zealous for Peace and Unity, *that with one mind, and one mouth, we may glorifie God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

S E R-

SERMON VIII.

Doing good, a security against injuries from men.

I P E T. III. 13.

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good ?

TH E Apostle in this and the former Chapter, earnestly presseth Christians to an holy and unblamable conversation, that the Heathen might have no occasion, from the ill lives of Christians, to reproach Christianity ; particularly he cautions
P them

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them against that abuse of christian liberty, which it seems too many were guilty of, casting off Obedience to their Superiours under that pretence ; telling them that nothing could be a greater scandal to their Religion, nor raise a more just prejudice in the minds of men against it : and therefore he strictly chargeth them with the Duty of Obedience in their several relations ; as of Subjects to their Governours, of Servants to their Masters, of Wives to their Husbands ; and in short, to practise all those Virtues, both among themselves and towards others, which are apt to reconcile and gain the affections of men to them ; to be charitable and compassionate, courteous and peaceable one towards another, and towards all men ; not only to abstain from injury and provocation, but from revenge by word or deed ; and instead thereof, to bless and do good, and by all possible means to preserve and pursue Peace. *Ver. 8, 9. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another ; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing,*

railing, but contrariwise blessing ; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

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Sermon. 6.

And to encourage them to the practice of these Virtues, he tells them, that they could by no other means more effectually consult the safety and comfort of their lives, *Ver. 10. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile ; let him eschew evil, and do good ; let him seek peace and ensue it.*

And this was the way to gain the favour of God, and to engage his Providence for our protection, *Ver. 12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers : but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

And that this would also be the best way to reconcile men to us, and to gain their good will, and to prevent injuries and affronts from them, *Ver. 13. And who is he that will harm you, &c.*



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In these words we have, *First*, a qualification supposed, *If ye be followers of that which is good.*

*Secondly*, The Benefit and Advantage we may reasonably expect from it, *viz.* Security from the ill usage and injuries of men. *Who is he that will harm you?*

*First*, The qualification supposed is, that we be *followers of that which is good*. But what is that? The Apostle takes it for granted, that every body knows it, and he had given instances of it before. He does not go about to define or explain it, but appeals to every Man's Mind and Conscience, to tell him what it is. It is not any thing that is disputed and controverted, which some men call good, and others evil; but that which all are agreed in, and which is universally approved and commended by Heathens as well as Christians, that which is substantially good, and that which is unquestionably so. It is not zeal for lesser things, about the ritual and ceremonial part of Religion, and a great  
strictness

strictness about the external parts of it, and much nicety and scrupulousness about things of no moment, as the Pharisees *'tything of mint, &c. about meats and drinks, and the observation of days, and the like; but a pursuit of the weightier things of the law, a care of the great Duties of Religion, mercy, and justice, and fidelity, those things wherein the Kingdom of God consists, Righteousness and Peace: Such as these the Apostle had instanced in, as substantial and unquestionable parts of goodness, things which admit of no dispute, but do approve themselves to the Reason and Conscience of all Mankind; and the practice of these he calls, following of that which is good.* \*

Serm. 8.

\* See more of this,

*Be ye followers of that which is good,* the word is μιμηται, *If ye imitate the good you see in others; in one Copy the word is ζηλωται, If ye be zealous of that which is good.* And this is not amiss. Zeal about lesser and disputable things is very unsuitable and misbecoming: but we cannot be too earnest and zealous in the pursuit of things

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things which are substantially and unquestionably good ; it is good and will become us to be zealously affected about such things. Some things will not bear much zeal, and the more earnest we are about them, the less we recommend our selves to the approbation of sober and considerate men. Great zeal about little and doubtful things, is an Argument of a weak Mind, infatuated by Superstition, or over-heated by Enthusiasm: but nothing more becomes a wise Man, than the serious and earnest pursuit of those things which are agreed on all hands to be good, and have an universal approbation among all Parties and Professions of men, how wide soever their differences may be in other matters. This for the qualification supposed, *If ye be followers of that which is good.* I proceed to the

*Second Thing in the Text, the Benefit and Advantage which may reasonably be expected from it, and that is security from the ill usage and injuries of men. Who is he that will harm you ? &c.* The Apostle doth not absolutely



lutely say, None will do it ; but he speaks of it as a thing so very unreasonable, and upon all accounts so unlikely and improbable, that we may reasonably presume that it will not ordinarily and often happen. Not but that good men are liable to be affronted and persecuted, and no Man's Virtues, how bright and unblemish'd soever, will at all times, and in all cases, exempt him from all manner of injury and ill-treatment : but the *following of that which is good* (as I have explain'd it) doth in its own Nature tend to secure us from the malice and mischief of men, and very frequently does it, and, all things consider'd, is a much more effectual means to this end, than any other course we can take ; and this the Apostle means when he says, *Who is he that will harm you ?* &c.

Serm. 8.

And this will appear, whether we consider the nature of Virtue and Goodness ; or the Nature of Man, even when it is very much depraved and corrupted ; or the Providence of God.

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I. If we consider the Nature of Virtue and Goodness, which is apt to gain upon the affections of men, and secretly to win their love and esteem. True goodness is inwardly esteemed by bad men, and many times had in very great esteem and admiration, even by those who are very far from the practice of it; it carries an Awe and Majesty with it; so that bad men are very often with-held and restrained from harming the good, by that secret and inward Reverence which they bear to goodness.

There are several Virtues, which are apt in their own Nature to prevent injuries and affronts from others. Humility takes away all occasion of insolence from the proud and haughty, it baffles pride, and puts it out of countenance. Meekness pacifies wrath, and blunts the edge of injury and violence. Suffering good for evil is apt to allay and extinguish enmity, to subdue the roughest dispositions, and to conquer even malice it self. And there are other Virtues which are apt  
in

in their own Nature to oblige men, and gain their good will, and make them our friends, and to tie their affections strongly to us; as Courtesie and Charity, Kindness and Compassion, and a readiness to do all good offices to all men: and the friendship and good will of others, is a powerful defence against injuries. Every Man will cry shame of those who shall fall foul upon him that hurts nobody. He that obliged many, shall have many to take his part when he is assaulted, to rise up in his defence and rescue, and to interpose between him and danger. *For a good man, says the Apostle, some would even dare to die.*

Serm.8.

Besides it is very considerable, that none of these Virtues expose Men to any danger and trouble from human Laws. When Christianity was persecuted, because it differ'd from, and opposed the received Religion and Superstition of the World, it was commonly acknowledged by the Heathen (as *Tertullian* tells us) that *the Christians were very good men in all other*



Vol. XI. *ther things, saving that they were Christians.* When the laws were most severe against Christians for their meetings, which they call'd seditious, and for their refusal to comply with the received superstition of the World, which they call'd contempt of the gods, yet there were all this while no Laws made against Modesty, and Humility, and Meekness, and Kindness, and Charity, and Peaceableness, and Forgiveness of Injuries. These Virtues are in their Nature of so unalterable goodness, that they could not possibly be made matter of accusation; no Government ever had the face to make Laws against them. And this the Apostle takes notice of as a singular commendation, and great testimony to the immutable goodness of these things, that in the experience of all Ages and Nations, there was never any such inconvenience found in any of them, as to give occasion to a Law against them, *Gal. 5. 22, 23. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, fidelity, meekness, temperance. Against such things there is no law. So that*

that goodness from its own Nature hath this security, that it brings men under the danger of no Law. Serm.8.

II. If we consider the Nature of Man, even where it is very much depraved and corrupted. There is something that is apt to restrain bad men from injuring those that are remarkably good; a Reverence for goodness, and the inward convictions of their own mind, that those whom they are going about to injure, are better and more Righteous than themselves; the fear of God, and of bringing down his vengeance upon their heads, by their ill treatment of his Friends and Followers; and many times the fear of men, who tho' they be not good themselves, yet have an esteem for those that are so, and cannot endure to see them wronged and oppressed, especially if they have been obliged by them, and have found the real effects of their goodness in good Offices done by them to themselves.

Besides

Besides that bad men are seldom bad for nought, without any cause given, without any manner of temptation and provocation to be so. Who will hurt a harmless Man, and injure the innocent? For what cause, or for what end should he do it? He must love mischief for it self, that will do it to those who never offer'd him any occasion and provocation.

III. If we consider the Providence of God, which is particularly concern'd for the protection of innocency and goodness. *For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his countenance will behold the upright.* This the Apostle takes notice of, in the *verse* before the Text, as the great security of good men against violence and injury, *The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.* So that if bad men were never so ill disposed toward the good, and bent to do them all the injury and mischief they could devise, the Providence of God hath a thousand ways to prevent it; and if he pleases  
to



to interpose between them and danger, who can harm them if they would? He can *snare the wicked in the works of their own hands*, and make *the mischief which they devised* against good men, *to return upon their own heads*; he can weaken their hands, and infatuate their Counsels, so that they shall not be able to bring their wicked enterprises to pass; he can change their hearts, and turn the fierceness and rage of men against us, into a fit of love and kindness, as he did the heart of *Esau* towards his Brother *Jacob*; and their bitterest enmity against truth and goodness, into a mighty zeal for it, as he did in *St. Paul*, who when he came to *Damascus*, fell a *Preaching up that way*, which he came thither on purpose to *persecute*. And this God hath promised to do for good men who are careful to please him. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he will make his enemies to be at peace with him.*

So that considering the Nature of Goodness, and the Nature of Man, and the Providence of God, *Who is like to harm us, if we be followers*  
of

Vol. XI. *of that which is good?* None can reasonably do it ; and he must be a very bad Man that can find in his heart to do it, when there is no cause, no temptation or provocation to it ; and the Providence of God, *who hath the hearts of men in his hands, and can sway and encline them as he pleaseth,* is particularly concerned to preserve good men from harm and mischief.

And yet we are not to understand this saying of the Apostle, as declaring to us the constant and certain event of things, without any exception to the contrary. For good men to appearance, nay those that are really so, and the very best of men, are sometimes exposed to great injuries and sufferings ; of which I shall give you an account in these following particulars.

I. Some that seem to be good, are not sincerely so ; and when they, by the just judgment of God, are punish'd for their Hypocrisie, in the opinion of many goodness seems to suffer. Some, under a great profession and colour of Religion, have done  
very

very bad things, and when they justly suffer for great crimes, they call punishment Persecution, and the Party and Church which they are of, call them Saints and Martyrs.

Serm.8.

II. Some that are really good, are very imperfectly so, have many flaws and defects, which do very much blemish and obscure their goodness; they are *followers of that which is good*, but they have an equal zeal for things which have no goodness in them, or so little that it is not worth all that stir and bustle which they make about them; and will contend as earnestly for a doubtful, and it may be for a false opinion, as for the Articles of the *Creed*, and for the *faith which was once delivered to the Saints*; and will oppose a little Ceremony with as much heat, as the greatest Immorality. In these cases, it is not mens goodness which raiseth enmity against them, but their imprudent zeal and other infirmities which attend it: But however, bad men are glad to lay hold of these occasions and pretences of enmity, which their indiscre-



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discretion offers. Good men may be, and frequently are mistaken in their opinions and apprehensions of things, but it is a great mistake to have an equal zeal for little and doubtful things, as for the great and indispensable Duties of the Christian life, and yet many times so as to neglect those to a great degree; and men must blame themselves for the inconveniences that happen to them for their own indiscretion; for neither will the nature of the thing bear them out alike, nor will the Providence of God be equally concerned to protect men in the following of that, which they through gross mistake, and a heady conceit of their own Knowledge in Religion, think to be good, as in the following of that which is really and unquestionably good.

III. The enmity of some men against goodness is so violent and implacable, that no innocency, no excellency of goodness, how great soever, can restrain their malice towards good men, or hinder the effects of it, when

when it comes in their way, and they have power to do them mischief. Against these the Providence of God is our best safe-guard, and it is Wisdom, as much as is possible; to keep out of their way, and to pray with St. Paul, that we may be *delivered from wicked and unreasonable men*. Men of so absurd a malice against goodness, that it is not to be prevented by any innocency or prudence; and so implacable, that there is no way to gain and reconcile them, nor perhaps is it much desirable: their good word would be no credit to us, and their friendship would be pernicious, when it cannot be had upon other terms, than of conniving at their faults, and being concerned in their quarrels, and at last quarrelling and breaking with them, unless we will *run with them to the same excess of riot*. The friendship of such men is more terrible than their enmity, and their malice much less to be dreaded than their kindness.

IV. The last and chief exception is  
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that of the Cross, when the Sufferings and Persecutions of good men are necessary for the great Ends of God's glory, for the Advancement of Religion, and the Example and Salvation of others. And with this exception all the declarations of Scripture concerning the temporal prosperity and safety of good men, and all the promises of the New Testament are to be understood. And this exception our Saviour himself expressly makes, *Mark. 10. 29, 30. Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospels, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecution; and in the world to come eternal life; that is, so far as a state of Persecution would admit, all these losses should be recompensed to them in this present time; as they were to the Apostles in a remarkable manner, when they who had but little to part with for the Gospel, had the Estates of the Christians laid*  
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at their feet and committed to their disposal, for the noblest purposes of Charity, and common support of Christians, which was as much to them, as if they had been Masters of the greatest Estates; and whatever was wanting to any of them in the accomplishment of this promise, was abundantly made up to them in the unspeakable and eternal Happiness of the World to come. And this exception the Apostle *St. Peter* is careful to mention expressly, immediately after the Text; for after he had said, *Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* he immediately adds, *But, and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctifie the Lord God in your hearts; that is, in this case, fear God more than men, and be ready always to give an answer to every man, that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you; that is, if ye be questioned for being Christians, be ready to own your profession, and to give a reason of it: So that the Apostle supposeth, that notwithstanding*

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ing what he had said, that ordinarily it is not in the Nature of men to persecute men for true goodness, yet they must not expect to be exempted from Persecution, which was necessary for the establishment of the Christian Religion.

In these cases God permits the Devil to instigate and exasperate evil men against those that are good, to act beyond their usual temper. Thus God, when he designed an illustrious example of Patience for all ages of the World, he lets loose the Devil, not only to stir up his instruments the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, against *Job*, but to afflict him immediately himself with bodily Pains and Diseases. In these and the like cases, the best men are exposed to the greatest Sufferings. Thus God permitted *Socrates*, that great light among the Gentiles, and the glory of Philosophy, to be cruelly treated and put to death for an example of Virtue, and a testimony against their impious and abominable Idolatry. And thus likewise when it was necessary

cessary for the common Salvation of men, and to give the world an Example beyond all exception of the greatest innocency, enduring the greatest indignities and sufferings with the greatest Patience, that one should suffer for all Mankind, he permitted the best Man that ever was, God and goodness incarnate, by wicked hands to be crucified and slain; and afterwards when it was necessary for the propagation and establishment of Christianity in the World, that the Truth of it should be sealed by the death of so many Martyrs, God was pleased to suffer the rage of bad men to break out into all manner of violence and cruelty.

But yet notwithstanding these Exceptions, those who make it their business to do good, and to excel in those Virtues which are apt to win and oblige Mankind, may in ordinary cases and times expect great safety and protection against the injuries of the World, from an exemplary Piety, and Innocency, and Good-

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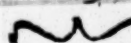
ness; for these sayings in the New Testament, that *through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God*, and *that whoever will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution*, are not equally to be extended to all places and times; but more peculiarly to be understood of the first times of Christianity, when the Providence of God thought fit to establish the Christian Religion upon the innocent Lives and patient Sufferings of the first professors of it.

The result from all this Discourse is, that we should not be weary of well-doing, but mind and follow the things which are substantially and unquestionably good, not doubting; but besides the infinite reward of it in the other World, it will ordinarily turn to our great security and advantage in this life, and save us harmless, from a great many mischiefs and inconveniences which others are exposed to. If we endeavour to excel in those Christian Virtues which the Apostle

He mentions before the Text, and which he means by our being followers of that which is good, we shall undoubtedly find the comfort of it, in those temporal benefits that will redound to us: For the Scripture hath not said in vain, *Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Glory, and honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good. That the fruits of righteousness is sown in peace of them that work peace; that by well-doing we shall put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and that he that in these things serveth Christ, is accepted of God, and approved of men.*

But if we mistake Religion, and place it in those things wherein it doth not really consist, in airy notions, and doubtful opinions, in superstitious conceits and practices, and in a fiery and furious zeal for

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Vol. XI.  things of no weight and substance, of no real Virtue and Goodness; if we be defective in the great Virtues of Meekness and Humility, of Peaceableness and Charity, of Kindness and Courtesie, of Forbearance and Forgiveness, of *rendering good for evil*, and *overcoming evil with good*, qualities which will universally endear us and recommend us to the Favour and Protection of God, and to the esteem and good will of Men; and if instead of these we abound in malice and envy, be proud and conceited, censorious and uncharitable, contentious and unpeaceable, rude and uncivil, impatient and implacable, we must not think it strange, if we be ill treated in this World, not for our goodness, but for our want of it; and we have no reason to wonder, if at every turn we meet with the inconveniences of our own heat and indiscretion, of our peevish and morose temper, of our factious and turbulent disposition. For this is an eternal Rule of truth,



*ordinarily secure.*

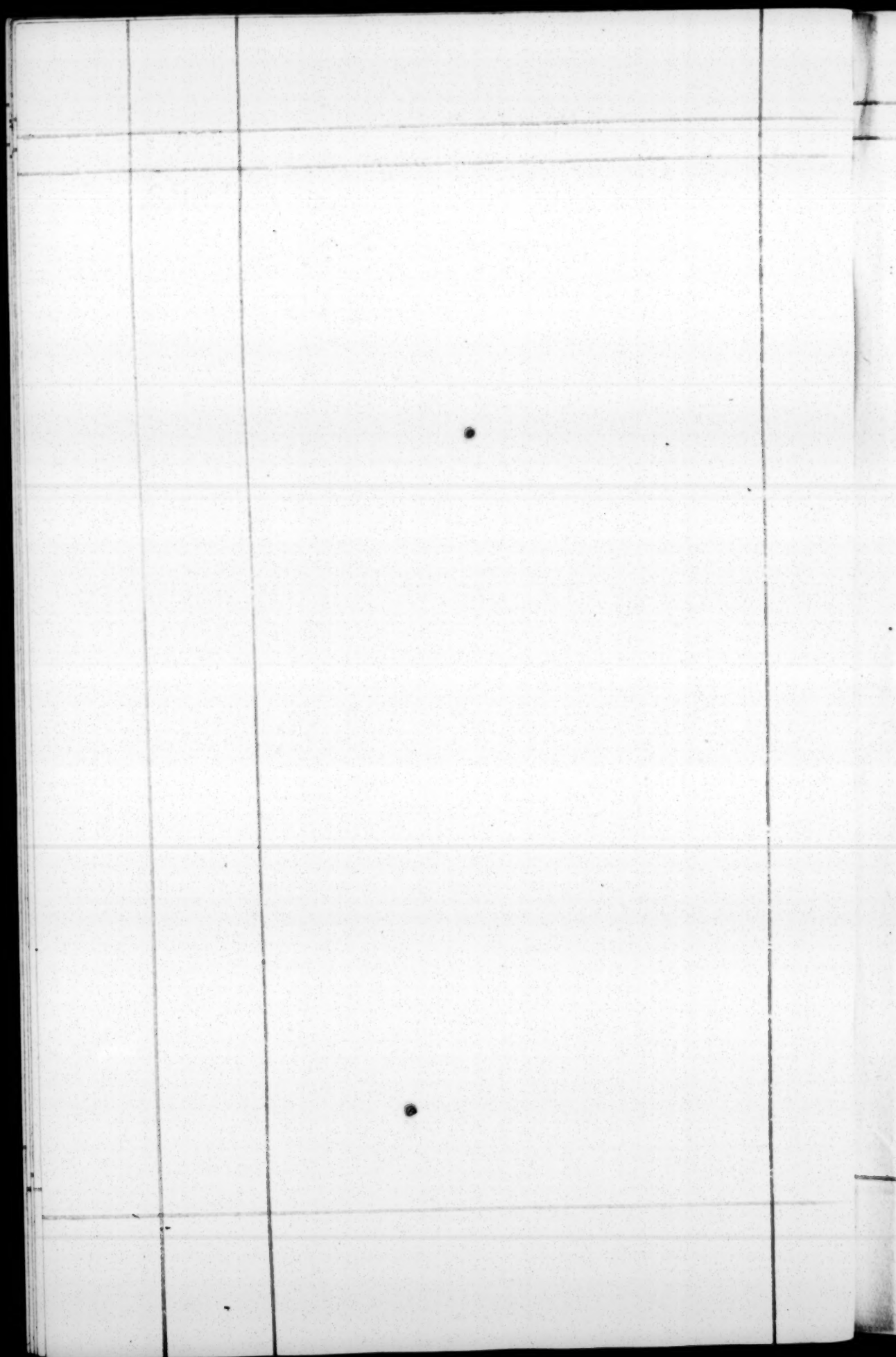
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truth, *As we sow, so shall we reap ;*  
every man shall be fill'd with his *Serm.8.*  
*own ways, and eat the fruit of his*  
*own doings.*

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SER-

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# SERMON IX.

Preach'd at *Whitehall*. 1685.

Of Diligence in our general, and  
particular Calling.

ECCL. IX. 10.

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do  
it with thy might : for there is no  
work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor  
wisdom in the grave, whither thou  
goest.*

**T**H E S E Words of the Royal  
Preacher are a general exhor-  
tation to Diligence and Industry, in  
that work which is most proper for  
us to do in this World. And I shall  
confider in them these *two* things.

*First,*



  
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*First*, The Matter of this Advice and Exhortation, and that is, that we would use great diligence about those things which are the proper Work and Employment of this life. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do ;* that is, the Work which is before thee, which is most proper for thee to propose to thy self, as the great End and Design of thy life, the Province and Charge which is appointed thee. So that these words, in the full compass and extent of them, may very well comprehend every reasonable purpose and undertaking, whatever is incumbent upon us as a Duty, and is matter of reasonable choice. *Do it with all thy might ;* that is, set about it with great care, use all possible diligence and industry for the effecting and accomplishing of it.

*Secondly*, Here is the Argument whereby the wise Preacher doth enforce this Counsel and Exhortation ; because this life is the proper season of activity and industry, of designing and  
doing

doing those things which are in order to a future Happiness ; and when this life is at an end, there will be no farther opportunity of working, there will nothing then remain, but to reap the Fruit, and to receive the just recompence of what we have done in this life ; *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest. In the grave,* this the LXX render by the word *ἀδνή*, by which the Greeks used to express the state of the dead, the condition of separate Souls of good or bad men after they are departed this life, and entered into another World. In which state, *Solomon* does not mean that departed Souls have no knowledge and sense of any thing, but that then there will be no place for any Counsel and Design, for any Activity and Industry in order to our Happiness : What we do to this purpose, we must do whilst we are in this World, it will be too late afterwards to think of altering or bettering our Condition.

These are the *two* parts of the Text, and they shall be the *two* heads  
of

Vol. XI. of my following Discourse; and God grant, that what shall be said upon them, may be effectual to persuade every one of us seriously to mind our great interest and concernment, and to apply our selves with all our might to that which is our proper work and business in this World.

*First*, We will consider the Matter of this Counsel and Exhortation, and that is, that we would use great Diligence and Industry about that which is our proper work and business in this life; and this may very probably comprehend in it these *two* things.

I. Diligence in our great work and business, that which equally concerns every Man, I mean the business of Religion, in order to the eternal Happiness and Salvation of our Souls.

II. Diligence in our particular Calling and Charge, whatever it be.

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I. Diligence in our great and general Work, that which equally concerns every Man, the business of Religion, in order to the eternal Happiness and Salvation of our Souls ; and this consists in these *two* things.

1. In a sincere Care and Endeavour of universal Obedience to God, by the conformity of our lives and actions to his Laws.

2. In case of sin and miscarriage, in a sincere Repentance for our sins, and a timely care to be reconcil'd to God.

1. In a sincere Care and Endeavour of universal Obedience to God, by the Conformity of our Lives and Actions to his Will and Law. And this is a great Work, and requires our greatest care and diligence to rectifie our minds, to restrain our evil inclinations, to subdue and mortifie our lusts, to correct the irregularity of our passions, to moderate and govern our appetites and affections, and to keep them within

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in due and reasonable bonnds, *to take heed to our ways, that we offend not with our tongue,* nor transgress our Duty by word or deed ; to serve God with true Devotion of mind, both in publick and private ; to attend upon the Duties of his Worship, and to perform all acts of Piety and Religion, with care and constancy, in the sincerity and uprightness of our Hearts ; to be Meek and Humble, Peaceable and Patient, Chearful and Contented with our condition ; to be ready not only to forgive injuries, but to requite them with kindness and good turns, to do all Offices of Humanity and Charity to all men, according to our ability and opportunity ; to instruct the ignorant, and to reduce those that are in error to the knowledge of the Truth, by wise Counsel and good Example ; to endeavour *to turn men from the evil of their ways, and to save their Souls from death ;* to be ready to supply mens outward wants and necessities, to comfort them in their sorrows, and to relieve them in their affliction and distress.

And

And these works of Compassion and Charity are perhaps more particularly intended here in the Text, for so the *Chaldee Paraphrase* interprets these words of *Solomon*, as a Precept of Charity, rendring them thus, *Do all thou canst, according to thy utmost ability in alms and charity*: for nothing but this will turn to our account in another World; no other way of laying out our Estates, will be of any advantage to us in the future state. And though I do not think *Solomon* did here intend to exclude any part of religious practice, yet he might very well have a more especial eye and regard to this, as one of the principal Instances and best Evidences of a true and sincere Piety, according to that of *St. James*, Chap. 1. Ver. last, *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction*. To be sure, our Saviour lays mighty weight upon it, by making it the great Article upon which men shall be tryed at the Judgment of the great day. And indeed no Religion is to be valued, that wants

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Humanity and Compassion; for so far as it departs from this, it departs from the true Nature of God and Religion.

So that it is a vast work which lies upon our hands, and which every one of us, from the highest to the lowest, are engaged in; this business of Religion, this care of our whole Man, and of our whole Duty, of the inward frame and disposition of our minds, and of all our words and actions, *to keep our hearts with all diligence*, and carefully to observe and govern all the inclinations and motions of our Souls, and *to order our whole conversation aright*; in a word, to do God all the service, and Men all the good that possibly we can, while we are in this World. This is the *first*.

2. And because *in many things we offend all*, and *there is no man that sinneth not*, another part of our work and care is, in case of transgression and miscarriage in any part of our Duty, to exercise Repentance for it,

it, that so we may be reconciled to God, and at peace with him.

Serm. 9.

And this is absolutely necessary, because our Life and Happiness depends upon it, and *except we repent we must perish*, and be miserable for ever. It cannot be denied but that this work of Repentance is very harsh and unpleasant, like the taking of Physick and searching into a Wound; but because it tends to our health and safety, and is the necessary way and means to a better condition, this severity must be submitted to, if we desire to be cured, and have a mind to be well; and the sooner we make use of this remedy the better, we shall find so much the less difficulty and pain in the cure.

And there is great reason why we should frequently exercise and renew our Repentance, because our failings are frequent, and in one kind or other we offend and provoke God every day; especially when we are coming to the Holy Sacrament, in which we solemnly renew our Covenant with

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God,

God, and promise him better Obedience for the future; we should examine our lives more strictly, and call our sins more particularly to remembrance, and exercise a most solemn and deep Repentance for them; this is the way to keep our accounts in a good measure even. And this surely is great Wisdom, to provide that we may have no long account to make up, no great scores to wipe off, when we come to be overtaken by sickness, and to lie upon our death-bed; that *innumerable transgressions* unrepented of, may not then *compass us about*, and stare us in the face, and fill our Souls with fear and confusion, with horror and amazement in a dying hour; that an insupportable load of guilt may not then lie upon our minds, and oppress our Consciences, when we are least able to bear it, and most unfit to deal with it, when we may not have time to call our sins particularly to remembrance, and to exercise a particular Repentance for them, and yet perhaps a general Repentance may not be sufficient, and available with God, for the pardon and forgiveness of them.

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Therefore we should exercise ourselves much in this work of Repentance in the days of our health, when we are fittest for it, and when it will be most acceptable to God, and when the sincerity of it will be most evident and comfortable to us, when we may know it to be true by the real and certain effects of it, in the change and amendment of our lives. Whereas a Death-bed Repentance is infinitely hazardous, because we may not perhaps have time and opportunity for the exercise of it; or if we should have that, yet hardly can we have opportunity for the tryal of it, whether it be sincere or not, and consequently must needs die very uncomfortably, and in great doubt and anxiety of mind, what will be our fate and doom in another World.

So that it is a great work which lies upon our hands, and equally concerns every one of us. The business of Religion, which consists in the strict care of our Duty to God and Man, and in the frequent exercise of

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Repentance for the sins and miscarriages of our Lives ; and we may consequently judge how great a care and diligence a work of so much difficulty, and of so great moment and importance does require and call for at our hands. But besides this, we must in the

II. Place likewise be diligent in our particular Calling and Charge, in that province and station which God hath appointed us, whatever it be ; whether it consists in the labour of our hands, or in the improvement of our minds, in order to the gaining of knowledge for our own pleasure and satisfaction, and for the use and benefit of others ; whether it lie in the skill of **G**overnment, and the Administration of publick Justice ; or in the management of a great Estate, of an honourable rank and quality above others, to the best advantage, for the honour of God, and the benefit and advantage of men, so as by the influence of our Power and Estate, and by the Authority of our Example, to contribute all we can, to the

the Welfare and Happiness of others. *Serm. 9.*

For it is a great mistake to think that any Man is without a Calling, and that God does not expect that every one of us should employ himself in doing good in one kind or other. Some Persons indeed, by the privilege of their Birth and Quality, are above a common Trade and Profession, but they are not hereby either exempted or excused from all business, and allowed to live unprofitably to others, because they are so plentifully provided for themselves : Nay on the contrary, they have so much the greater obligation, having the greater liberty and leisure to attend the good of others ; the higher our character and station is, we have the better opportunities of being publicly useful and beneficial ; and the heavier will our account be, if we neglect these opportunities. Those who are in a low and private condition, can only shine to a few ; but they that are advanced to a great height above others, may, like the



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Heavenly bodies, dispense a general light and influence, and scatter Happiness and Blessings among all that are below them.

And as they are capable of doing more good than others, so with more ease and effect; that which Persons of an inferiour rank can hardly bring others to, by all the importunity of counsel and perswasion, as namely to the practice of any Virtue, and the quitting and abandoning of any Vice, a Prince and a great Man that is good himself, may easily gain them to, without ever speaking a word to them, by the silent Authority and powerful allurement of his Example. So that tho' every Man have not a particular profession, yet the highest among men have some employment allotted to them by God, suitable to their condition, a Province which he expects they should administer and adorn with great care.

The great business of the lower part of Mankind is to provide for themselves  
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the necessaries of life, and it is well if they can do it with all their care and diligence; but those who are of higher rank, their proper business and employment is to dispense good to others; which surely is a much happier condition and employment, according to that admirable saying of our Saviour, mentioned by St. Paul, *It is a more blessed thing to give, than to receive.* Those of meaner condition can only be *men* to one another, and it were well if they would be so; but he that is highly raised and advanced above others, hath the happy opportunity in his hands, if he have but the heart to make use of it, to be *a kind of God to men.*

Let no Man then, of what Birth, or Rank, or Quality soever, think it beneath him to serve God, and to be useful to the benefit and advantage of men; let us remember *the Son of God*, a Person of the highest Quality and Extraction that ever was, who spent himself wholly in this blessed work of doing good, toyled and laboured in it as it had been for his life, sub-

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submitted to all the circumstances of meanness, to all the degrees of contempt, to all kind of hardship and sufferings, for the Benefit and Salvation of men, sweat drops of blood, and at last poured it all forth in full streams, to save us from eternal misery and ruin ; and is any of us better than *the Son of God, the heir of all things, and the elder brother of us all* ? Shall any of us, after this, think ourselves too good to be employed in that work which God himself disdained not to do, when he appeared in the Likeness and Nature of Man ?

If we would esteem things rightly, and according to reason, the true privilege and advantage of greatness is, to be able to do more good than others ; and in this the Majesty and Felicity of God himself doth chiefly consist, in his ready and forward inclination, and in his infinite power and ability to do good. The Creation of the World was a great and glorious design, but this God only calls his *Work* ; but to preserve and support the



the Creatures which he hath made, to bless them and to do them good, to govern them by wise Laws, and to conduct them to that happiness which he designed for them, this is his rest, his *perpetual Sabbath*, his great *delight and satisfaction* to all eternity; to do good is our duty and our business, but it is likewise the greatest Pleasure and Recreation, that which refresheth the heart of God and Man.

I have insisted the longer upon this, that those who are thought to be above any Calling, and to have no obligation upon them, but to please themselves, may be made sensible, that according to their ability and opportunity, they have a great work upon their hands, and more business to do than other men; which if they would but seriously mind, they would not only please God, but I dare say, satisfy and please themselves much better than they do in any other course. I know it is a Duty particularly incumbent upon the lower part of Mankind, to be diligent in their particular Calling,

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ling, that so they may provide for themselves and their Families; but this is not so proper for this place, and if it were, the necessity of human life will probably prompt and urge men more powerfully to this, than any Argument and Perswasion that I can use. I proceed therefore in the

*Second Place*, to offer some considerations to excite our care and diligence in this great work, which God hath given us to do in this World, I mean chiefly the business of Religion, in order to the eternal Happiness and Salvation of our Souls. And to this purpose, I shall offer five or six Arguments, reserving the great Motive and Consideration in the Text to the last, *Because, there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.*

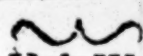
I. Let us consider the Nature of our work, which is such, as may both excite and encourage our diligence and care about it. It is indeed a *service*, but such as is our *perfect freedom*; 'tis the service of God, whom  
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to serve is the greatest honour that Man or any other Creature is capable of; it is Obedience, but even Obedience, considering our ignorance and frailty, is much wiser and safer for us, than a total exemption from all Law and Rule; for the Laws which God hath given us, are not imposed upon us merely for his will and pleasure, but chiefly for our benefit and advantage. So that to obey and please God, is in truth nothing else but to do those things which are really best for our selves.

Besides that this work of Religion will abundantly recompence all the labour and pains it can cost, if we consider the *fruit* and *end* of it, which is *the Salvation of our Souls*; so St. Paul assures us, *Rom. 6. 22.* that if we have *our fruit unto holiness*, our *end* shall be *everlasting life*. Nay, this Work doth not want its present encouragement and reward, if we consider the peace and pleasure which attends it; *Great peace*, saith *David*, *have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.* Religion doth not design

Serm.9.



Vol. XI.  sign to rob men of the true delights of life, of any lawful pleasure and enjoyment, it only appoints them their due place, and season, and measure, without which they cannot be truly tastful and pleasant : If we make pleasure and recreation our business, it will become a burden, and leave a sting behind it ; but if we make it our great business to be good, and to do good, we shall then take true pleasure in our recreations and refreshments, we shall *eat our bread with joy, and drink our Wine with a merry heart*, as *Solomon* expresseth it, a little before the Text. Religion doth not ordinarily debar men of any contentment, which they can wisely and safely take in any of the enjoyments of this life, but directs us to do those things which will yield the truest and most refined pleasure, and so governs us in the use and enjoyment of worldly comforts, that there shall be no bitterness in them, or after them ; and in truth, after all our search and enquiry after pleasure and happiness, we shall find that there is no solid and lasting pleasure, but in living righteously and religiously ;

ously ; and the pleasure of this is so great, that a Heathen Philosopher, speaking of a virtuous life according to the true Precepts of Philosophy, breaks out into this rapture and transport concerning the wonderful pleasure of it, *Vel unus dies vere & ex præceptis tuis actus peccandi immortalitati est anteferendus*, Even one day truly spent according to thy precepts, is to be valued above an immortality of sinning. There is no life so pleasant as that of the pious and good Man, who being contented with himself, every thing about him contributes to his chearfulness, *Gratior it dies, & Soles melius nitent*, The day passeth more pleasantly, and the Sun shines brighter to him ; and every Object which he beholds is more delightful, because the Man is at peace and ease within himself.

II. Let us consider, how great our Work is, and then we shall easily be convinc'd what care it requires, what diligence it calls for from us. Very few Persons, I doubt, are sufficiently sensible, how much thought and consideration,

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consideration, how much care and vigilancy, how firm a resolution and earnest contention of mind is necessary to the business of Religion, to the due cultivating and improving of our minds, to the mortifying and subduing of our lusts, to the mastering and governing of our passions, to the reforming of our tempers, to the correcting of all our irregularities of our appetites and affections, and to the reducing of our crooked wills, which have been long obstinately bent the wrong way, to the straightness of that Rule which God hath given us to walk by.

Few, I fear, consider how much pains is necessary to the storing of our minds with good Principles, and to the fixing and riveting in our Souls all the proper motives and considerations to engage us to Virtue, that in all the occasions of our lives they may have their due force and influence upon us. Few of us take pains to understand the just bounds and limits of our Duty, and so to attend thereto, as to be always upon our guard



guard against the infinite temptations of human life, and the many malicious enemies of our Souls, that we may not be circumvented by *the wiles of the Devil*, nor caught in those snares which he lays before us in our ways, that we may not be wrought upon by the insinuations, nor overreach'd by *the deceitfulness of sin*.

How few consider what care and watchfulness of our selves, what constancy and fervency of Prayer to God is necessary to the due discharge of every part of our duty ; or to the right exercise of every Grace and Virtue ! Besides, an earnest imploring of the Divine Assistance, there is required likewise a particular care and application of mind, that we may fail in no point ; and that, as St. James expresseth it, *We may be entire, wanting nothing* ; that our Faith and our Hope, our Devotion and our Charity, our Humility and our Patience, and every other grace may be exercised in the best manner, and *have its proper work*.

III. Consider, what incredible pains men will take, what diligence they will use for bad purposes, and for ends infinitely less considerable, *ut jugulent, homines, surgunt de nocte Latrones, ut teipsum serves, non expergiscere*, Thieves will rise and travel by night to rob and kill, and shall we use no care, no vigilance to save our selves? What drudges and slaves are many men to their sensual pleasures and lusts? How hot and fierce upon revenge? And what hazards will they run to satisfy this unreasonable and devilish passion; and thereby to make way for a speedy and bitter Repentance, which always treads upon the heels of revenge? For no sooner hath any Man executed his rage upon another, but his Conscience presently turns it upon himself.

How industrious do we see men at their Recreations and Sports, taking really more pains for the sake of pleasure, than the poor Man does that works for his living?

What

What a violent thirst, and insatiable covetousness possesseth some men after Learning and Knowledge? How will they toil and watch, wear out their Eyes, and waste their Spirits, and pursue their Studies, not only with the neglect of fitting diversion, but even of the necessary support and reparation of Nature, by Meat and Sleep? nay, many times to encrease their Learning, they weaken their understandings, and for the gaining of more knowledge, do disable that Power and Faculty which should make use of it when they have it.

How will men attend for several hours to a lewd and extravagant Play, and sit not only with patience, but with delight to hear things spoken, which are neither fit to be spoken nor heard?

And above all, how eager and earnest, how busie and industrious are a great part of Mankind, in the pursuit of their ambitious and covetous designs? How sorely will they labour



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and travel? how hardly will they be contented to fare, and how meanly will they live themselves, to make they know not whom rich; even any body that happens to come in their way, when they make their last Wills.

And are men at all this pains for compassing of their low and mean, of their vile and wicked designs, to do themselves no good; nay for the most part, to hurt and destroy themselves; and are the present pleasures and satisfaction of our minds, and eternal life and happiness in another World, things of no value and esteem with us? Is Salvation it self so slight and inconsiderable a thing, that it deserves none of this care and diligence to be used for the obtaining of it?

IV. Consider that when we come to die, nothing will yield more true and solid consolation to us, than the remembrance of an useful and well-spent life, a life of great labour and diligence, of great zeal and faithfulness

ness in the service of God, and on the contrary, with what grief and regret shall we look back upon all those precious hours which we have so fondly misplac'd in sin and vanity? How shall we then wish that we could recall them and live them over again, that we might spend them better; All that time which now lies upon our hands, and we know not how to bestow it and pass it away, will then most assuredly lie heavy upon our Consciences. What anguish and confusion have I seen in the looks and speeches of a dying Man, caused only by the grievous remembrance of an unprofitable and ill-spent life! So foolish are many men, as never seriously to think for what end they came into the world, till they are just ready to go out of it.

V. Consider, that the degrees of our Happiness in another world, will certainly bear a proportion to the degrees of our diligence and industry, in serving God and doing good. And it is an Argument of a mean Spirit, not to aspire after the best and happiest

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dition, which is to be attained by us ; to be contented barely to live, when by our pains and industry, we may become considerable, and raise our selves above the common level of men, is a sign of a poor and degenerate mind ; so is it in the business of Religion, to be contented with any low degree of Virtue and Goodness, and consequently of Glory and Happiness, when by a great diligence and industry in *serving our generation according to the will of God*, we may be of the number of those, *whose reward shall be great in heaven*, and have a place there, among those *righteous persons*, who shall *shine as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father*.

Besides, that it may prove a thing of dangerous consequence to us, to deal thus strictly with God, and to drive so near and hard a bargain with him ; we may easily miss of Happiness and come short of Heaven, if we only design just to get thither ; we may be mistaken in the degree of Holiness  
and



and Virtue, which is necessary to recommend us to the Divine Favour and Acceptance, and to make us capable of the glorious reward of eternal life : For *unto whom soever much is given*, saith our Saviour, *of him much shall be requir'd* ; to him that hath only *one talent* committed to him, it may be sufficient to have gained *One* ; but he that hath *many talents* entrusted with him, may gain *One*, and yet be a *wicked and slothful Servant* ; proportionably to our advantages and opportunities, our duty encreaseth upon our hands, and better and greater things may justly be expected from us. The consideration whereof, should make us unwearied in our endeavours of doing good, and *stedfast and unmoveable*, and *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, for as much as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord,

VI. and *Lastly*, Let us consider the Argument here in the Text, *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whether we are going.* *Longe quiescendi tempora*

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*fata dabunt*, we shall then rest from our labours, and our works will follow us. This life is the time of our activity and working, the next is the season of retribution and recompence; we shall then have nothing to do, but either to reap and enjoy the comfort of well-doing, or to repent the folly of an ill-spent life, and the irreparable mischief which thereby we have brought upon our selves. *There is no work nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest*; intimating that our life is a continual journey towards the Grave, shorter or longer as God pleaseth; and many times when we think our selves far from it, we may be just upon it, and ready to stumble into it. So that our time of working may be very short, to be sure it is very uncertain.

And it is very well worth our consideration, that as *there is no work nor wisdom in the grave*, so there is very little to be exercised when we come to draw near to it, whether it be by sickness or old age: *Sufficient* surely *for that day will be the evil thereof*; we had

had need then to have nothing else  
to do, but to be old and weak, to  
be sick and dye; we shall find that  
to be burden and trouble enough.

Serm.9.

*Let us therefore work the work of him  
that sent us into the world, while it is  
day; for the night cometh, saith our  
Saviour, (by which may probably be  
meant the time of sickness or old  
age,) the night cometh when no man can  
work; so that what we do, we must  
do quickly, mind the work which is  
before us, and ply it with all our  
might, as if it were the last opportu-  
nity we should ever have; and so it  
may prove for ought we know, for it  
is ten to one but that some here pre-  
sent, and God knows which of us it  
may be, may now have the last oppor-  
tunity in our hands, and that but a  
slippery hold of it, and may never  
have this Counsel given us again,  
nor perhaps be long in a capacity to  
make use of it; for when death hath  
once overtaken us, it will fix us in an  
unchangeable state; as the tree falls,  
so it shall lye.*

This



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This is the time of our work and preparation for another World, and what we do towards it in this life, will avail us in the other ; but if this opportunity be neglected , there is nothing to be done by us afterwards, but to inherit the fruit of our own folly and neglect, to sit down in everlasting sorrow, and to be immutably fix'd in that miserable state, which whilst we were in this World we could never be perswaded to take any tolerable care to avoid.

And if we can do nothing for our selves to help and relieve us in that state, much less can we think it can be done for us by others, by the consigning of *Masses* and *Prayers*, of *Merits* and *Indulgences* to our use and benefit in another World. No, so soon as ever we are pass'd into the other state, we shall enter upon a condition of happiness or misery, that is never to be altered. So that this life is the proper season for Wisdom to shew it self, and to exercise our best industry for the attaining of happiness ; it will be

be too late afterwards to think of altering or bettering our condition, for death will conclude and determine our state one way or other, and what we are when we leave the world, good or bad, fitted for happiness or misery, we shall remain and continue so for ever.

Serm.9.

Therefore it infinitely concerns all of us, to exercise our best Wisdom in this present life, and what we have to do for our Souls, and for all eternity, *to do it with our might* ; to contrive and use the best means to be happy, while the opportunity of doing it is yet in our hands ; we may easily let it slip, but no care, no wisdom, no diligence, no repentance can retrieve it ; when it is once lost, it is lost for ever.

*Hear then the conclusion of the whole matter* ; would we enjoy our selves and the peace of our minds while we live? would we have good hopes and comfort in our death, and after death would we be happy for ever? Let us lay the foundation of all this, in the activity

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activity and industry of a religious and holy life ; a life of unspotted purity and temperance in the use of sensual pleasures, of sincere Piety and Devotion towards God, of strict justice and integrity, and of goodness and charity towards men.

And let us consider that many of us are a great way already on our journey towards the Grave, that our day is declining apace, and the shadows of the Evening begin to be stretched out, therefore that little of our life which is yet behind us should be precious to us, *ut esse solis gratius lumen solet, jam jam cadentis*, we should improve that which yet remains, as it were for our lives, always remembering that our only opportunity of working, of designing and doing great and happy things for our selves, is on this side the Grave, and that this opportunity will expire and dye with us ; *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither we are going.*

Now

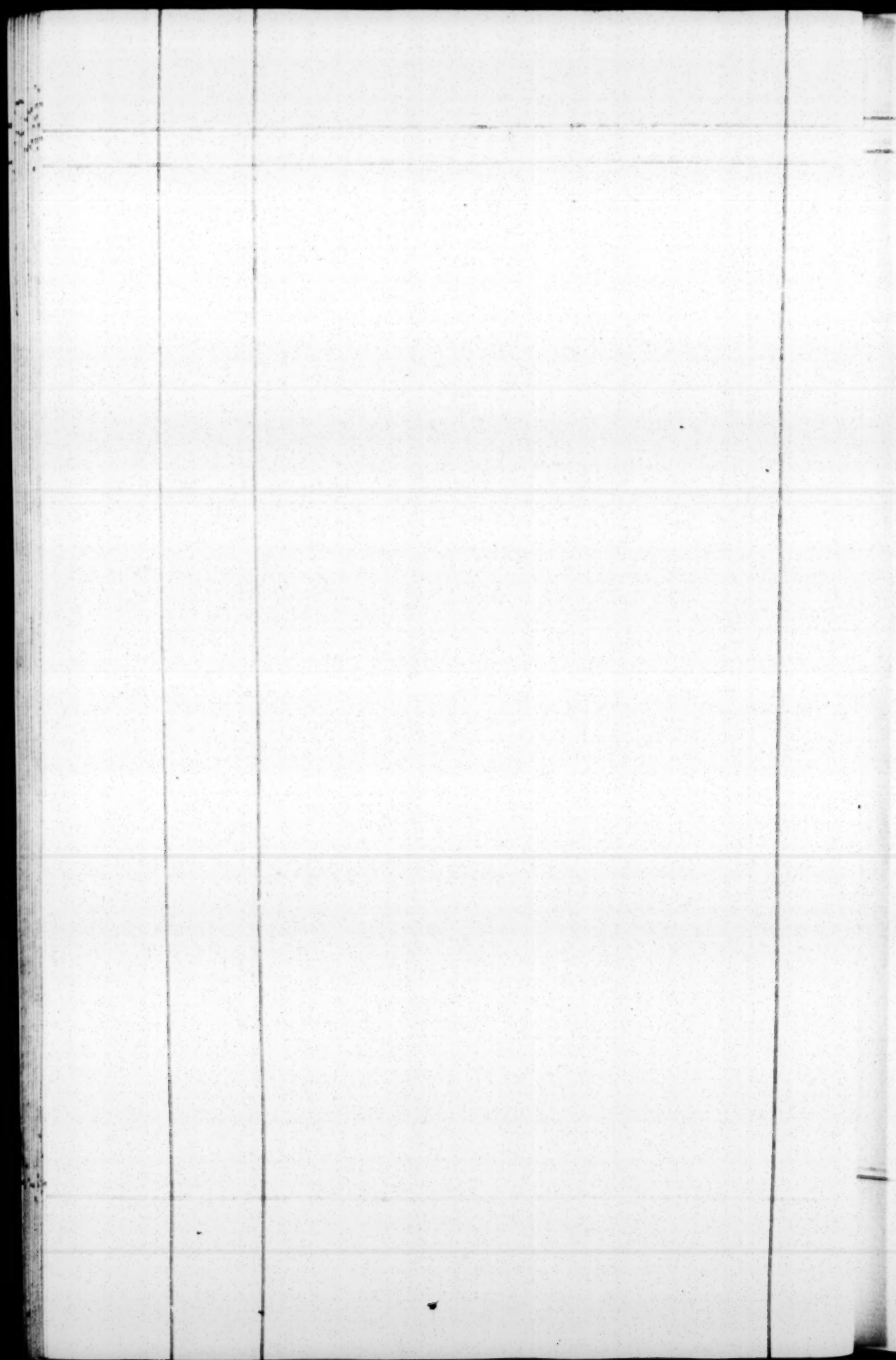


*Now God of his infinite mercy grant, that we may all of us know in this our day, the things which belong to our present peace, and future happiness, before they be hid from our eyes, for his mercy's sake in Jesus Christ ; To whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise, now and for evermore.*

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S E R.

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# SERMON X.

Of the Blessedness of Giving, more  
than that of Receiving.

ACTS XX. 35.

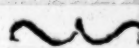
*And to remember the words of the Lord  
Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed  
to give, than to receive.*

. The whole verse runs thus,

*I have shewed you all things, how that so  
labouring, ye ought to support the weak,  
and to remember the words of the Lord  
Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed  
to give, than to receive.*

**T**HE words which I have read to  
you, have this particular ad-  
vantage to recommend them to our  
more attentive consideration, that they  
are a remarkable Saying of our Lord  
himself,



 himself, not recorded by any of the  
 Vol. XI. *Evangelists* among his other Sayings  
 and Discourses, but remembred by the  
 Apostles, and by some of them deli-  
 vered to St. Paul, and by him pre-  
 served to us in his farewell-speech to  
 the *Elders* of *Ephesus*. In which, af-  
 ter he had given them some needful  
 advice, and commended them to the  
 grace of God, he appeals to them  
 concerning the integrity of his Con-  
 versation among them ; that he was  
 so far from seeking his own advantage,  
 and from coveting any thing that was  
 theirs, that he had not only support-  
 ed himself, but also relieved others by  
 the labour of his own hands ; giving  
 them herein a great Example of Cha-  
 rity, which, it seems, he was wont  
 to enforce upon them by an excellent  
 saying of our Lord, *It is more blessed  
 to give, than to receive.*

And it is really a particular endear-  
 ment of this Saying to us, that being  
 omitted by the *Evangelists*, and in dan-  
 ger of being lost and forgotten, it was  
 so happily retrieved by St. Paul, and  
 recorded by St. Luke. The common  
 sayings

Sayings of ordinary persons perish without regard, and are spilt like water upon the ground, which no body goes about to gether up; but the little and short Sayings of wise and excellent men are of great value, like the dust of Gold, or the least sparks of Diamonds. And such is this Saying of our Lord, which is not only valuable out of respect to its Author, but for the sake of that admirable sense which is contained in it.

Some Interpreters have needlessly troubled themselves to find these words, or something equivalent to them in the Gospel. That the sense of them may be inferr'd from several passages in the Gospel, none will deny; but that they are either expressly to be found there, or that there is any Saying that sounds to the same sense, I think no body can shew. Besides that, *St. Paul* cites a particular Sentence or Saying of our Lord, that was *in*, and in those very words spoken by him.

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And

And there is no reason to imagine, that the Gospels are a perfect and exact account of all the sayings and actions of our Lord, tho' St. *Luke* calls his Gospel, *A Treatise of all things that Jesus did and spake*; that is, of the principal Actions of his life, and the substance of his Discourses, at least so much of them as is needful for us to know: For St. *Luke* leaves out several things related by the other *Evangelists*. And St. *John* expressly tells us, that *Jesus* did innumerable things not recorded in the History of his life: And there is no doubt but the Disciples of our Lord remember'd many particular Sayings of his, not set down in the Gospels, which upon occasion they did relate and communicate to others, as they did this to St. *Paul*.

The words themselves are the Proposition I shall speak to, *It is a more blessed thing to give, than to receive*. This I know seems a Paradox to most men, who know no happiness but in hoarding up what they have, and in receiving and heaping up more; but



but as strange as this Saying may appear, the sense of it is owned and assented to by those great Oracles of Reason, the wisest and most considerate heathen; ἡ ἀρετῆς μᾶλλον τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἢ τὸ εὖ πάσχειν, *It is a more virtuous thing to do, than to receive good,* says Aristotle; which according to his opinion was to say, it is a greater happiness, because he placed happiness in the practice and exercise of Virtue. To the same purpose is that saying of Plutarch, εὖ ποιεῖν ἢ ὄν ἐστιν ἢ πάσχειν, *There is more pleasure in doing a kindness, than in taking one.* And that of Seneca, *Malim non recipere beneficia, quam non dare;* *Of the two, I had rather not receive benefits, than not bestow them.* And that the Heathen have spoken things to the same sense with this Saying of our Saviour's, is so far from being any prejudice to this Saying of our Saviour, that it is a great commendation of it, as being an Argument that our Saviour hath herein said nothing, but what is very agreeable to the best notions of our minds, and to the highest Reason and Wisdom of Man-

Vol. XI. kind. In the handling of this Proposition, I shall do these *two* things.

*First*, Endeavour to convince men of the Truth and Reasonableness of it.

*Secondly*, To perswade men to act suitably to it.

*First*, To convince men of the Truth and Reasonableness of this Principle, that *It is more blessed to give, than to receive.* And this will fully appear by considering these *three* things.

I. That it is an Argument of a more happy Spirit and Temper.

II. Of a more happy State and Condition. And,

III. That it shall have the Happiness of a greater Reward.

I. To be governed by this Principle, is an Argument of a more happy Spirit and Temper. To do good, to be

be useful and beneficial to others, to be of a kind and obliging disposition, of a tender and compassionate Spirit, sensible of the straits and miseries of others, so as to be ready to ease and relieve them (for to this kind of Goodness and Charity the Apostle applies this Saying of our Saviour, as appears by the Context) this certainly is the happiest Spirit and Temper in the World; and is an Argument of a noble, and generous, and large Heart, that is not contracted within it self, and confined to little and narrow designs, and takes care of no body but it self, envying that others should share with it, and partake of its Happiness; but is free and open, *ready to do good, and willing to communicate*, and thinks its own happiness increased, by making others happy.

It is the property of narrow and envious Spirits, to think their own Happiness the greater, because they have it alone to themselves; but the noblest and most heavenly Dispositions desire that others should share



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with them in it. Of all Beings God is the farthest removed from envy and ill will, and the nearer any Creature approacheth to him, the farther it is from this hellish disposition. For it is the temper of the Devil to grudge Happiness to others; he envied that Man should be in Paradise, and was restless till he had got him out.

Some Perfections are of a more solitary Nature and Disposition, and shine brightest when they are attained to but by few, as Knowledge and Power: But the Nature of Goodness is to diffuse and communicate it self, and the more it is communicated, the more glorious it is. And therefore Knowledge and Power may be in a Nature most contrary to Gods; the Devil hath these Perfections in a high degree.

To receive good from others is no certain Argument of Virtue or Merit, for the unworthy and unthankful often receive benefits: But to be good and do good, is the excellency of Virtue, because it is to resemble God  
in

in that which is the most amiable and glorious of all his other Perfections. And therefore when *Moses* desires to see God's glory, *Exod.* 33. 19. he tells him, that *he will cause all his goodness to pass before him.* Without Goodness the Power and Wisdom of God would be terrible, and raise great dread and superstition in the minds of men. Without Goodness Power would be tyranny and oppression, and Wisdom would degenerate into craft and mischievous contrivance. So that a Being endow'd with all Power and Wisdom, and yet wanting Goodness, would be a dreadful and omnipotent mischief. We are apt to dread Power, and to admire Knowledge, and to suspect great Wisdom and Prudence; but we can heartily love and reverence nothing but true Goodness. 'Tis not the infinite Power and Knowledge of God considered abstractedly, and in themselves, but these in conjunction with his great Goodness, that make him at once the most awful and amiable Being in the World. Which is the reason why our Saviour, *Matth.* 5. 48. speaks of

Serm. 10

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the Mercy, and Goodness, and Patience of God, as the top and sum of the Divine Perfections, *Be ye therefore perfect, as your father which is in heaven is perfect.* How is that? In being good to the evil and unthankful, as God is, who makes his sun to rise, and his rain to fall, not only on the just, but unjust. And therefore St. Luke renders it, *Be ye therefore merciful, as your father which is in heaven is merciful.* To be good and merciful as God is, is to be perfect as he is; because it is to imitate him in that which is his chief Perfection.

Gratitude is one of the noblest Virtues, and our Goodness to men is gratitude in us to God. It is an acknowledgment of the blessings we have received from God; the best use we can make of them, and the best requital we can make to him for all his benefits. For we can give him nothing again, because he stands in need of nothing. But a truly grateful person, who hath a kindness done to him by one that is out of all capacity and reach of requital, will enquire whether there be any of his Family and Relations,



Relations, to whom he may shew kindness for his sake. Yea benefits have often been requited by thankful persons, upon those who did but resemble their Benefactors, tho' they were no ways related to them. Tho' we can do nothing to God, yet we may do it to men, who are *made after the Image of God*. We may shew kindness to his Relations, and to those of his Household and Family, to his Creatures, to his Servants, to his Friends, to his Children here in the Earth.

Serm. 10

Besides that our Goodness to others like our selves is an argument of great consideration and prudence ; 'tis a sign that we know our selves, and consider what we are, and what we may be ; it shews, that we have a due sense of the indigence and infirmity of humane Nature, and of the change and vicissitude of humane affairs ; it is a just sense and acknowledgment of our state, that we are insufficient for our own happiness, and must depend upon the kindness, and good-will, and friendship of other men ;

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men; that we all either do or may stand in need of others one time or other: for he who is now in the greatest plenty and abundance of all things, and things *his mountain so strong, that he can never be moved*, may by a sudden revolution of fortune, by a thousand accidents, be thrown down from his height of prosperity, into the depth of misery and necessity.

And as it is an argument of consideration, so of great prudence. He that is good to others, apt to commiserate their sad case, and to relieve them in their straits, takes the wisest and surest way that can be, to encline and engage others to be good to him, when it shall fall to his lot to stand in need of their kindness and pity. Upon this account our Saviour commends the *prudence of the unjust Steward*, who laid in for the kindness of others, against himself should have occasion for it.

And though it should happen otherwise, and that we should have an  
uninterrupted

uninterrupted tenour of prosperity, (which few or none have) or that coming to stand in need of others, our kindness should meet with no equal returns, yet it would not be quite lost, For as *Seneca* truly says, *delectat etiam sterilis beneficii conscientia*, tho' our charity should fall upon stony and barren ground, and we should find no fruit of it from those whom we have obliged, yet there is a pleasure in being conscious to our selves, that we have done well, what was worthy and generous, and what became wise and considerate men to do, whatever the event and success be: For setting aside all selfish respects, purely out of humanity and charity, and a generous compassion, we should be ready as we have opportunity to do good to all that stand in need of our kindness and help.

So that a disposition to do good is the best and happiest temper of mind, because it is the nearest resemblance of the Divine Nature, which is perfectly happy: it is a grateful acknowledgment of our obligations to God,  
and



and all that we can render to him for his benefits ; it is an argument of great wisdom and consideration ; it gives ease and satisfaction to our minds : and the reflection upon any good that we have done, is certainly the greatest contentment and pleasure in the World, and a felicity much beyond that of the greatest fortune of this world : Whereas the Spirit contrary to this is always uneasie to it self ; the envious and malicious, the hard-hearted and ill-natured man carries his own torment and hell about him, his mind is full of tumultuous agitations and unquiet thoughts : But were our Nature rectified, and brought back to its primitive frame and temper, we should take no such pleasure in any thing as in acts of kindness and compassion, which are so suitable and agreeable to our Nature, that they are peculiarly called *Humanity*, as if without this temper we were not truly *men*, but something else disguised under a humane shape.

II. *To give*, is an argument of a more happy state and condition, than  
to

to receive. To receive from others is an argument of indigency, and plainly shews that we are in want and necessity; either that we stand in need of something, or that we think we do, and either of these conditions is far from perfect happiness: But to give, is an argument of fulness and sufficiency, that we have more than is necessary for our selves, and something to spare.

Serm. 10

To receive kindness from others, supposeth we stand in need of it; and to stand in need of it, is to be in a state of being obliged and indebted. Obligation is a dear thing, and a real debt which lies heavy and uneasie upon a grateful mind: So much obligation as any man hath to another, so much he hath lost of his own liberty and freedom; for it gives him that hath obliged us, a superiority and advantage over us. And what *Solomon* says of *the Borrower*, that *he is a Servant to the Lender*, is in proportion true in this case, that *the Receiver is a Servant to the Giver*.

But

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But to be able to benefit others, is a condition of freedom and superiority, and is so far from impairing our liberty, that it shews our power : And the happiness which we confer upon others, by doing them good, is not only a contentment to our selves, but we do in some sort enjoy the happiness we give, in being conscious to our selves that we are the Authors of it. And could we but once come to this excellent temper, to delight in the good that others enjoy, as if it were our own (and 'tis our own, if we be the Instruments of it, and take pleasure in it) I say could we but once come to this temper, we need not envy the wealth and splendor of the most prosperous upon earth ; for upon these terms the happiness of the whole world would in some sort be ours, and we should have a share in the pleasure and satisfaction of all that good which happens to any man any way, especially by our means.

To depend upon another, and to receive from him, and to be behold-  
ing to him, is the necessary imper-  
fection



fection of Creatures: But to confer Benefits upon others, is to resemble God, and to approach towards Divinity. *Aristotle* could say, that by narrowness and selfishness, by envy and ill-will, men degenerate into Beasts, and become Wolves and Tygers to one another; but by goodness and kindness, by mutual compassion and helpfulness, men become Gods to one another. To be a Benefactor, is to be as like God as 'tis possible for men to be; and the more any one partakes of this divine quality and disposition, the liker and the nearer he is to God, *who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his Works.*

The blessed Angels, who behold the Face of God continually, are as it were perfectly transform'd into the Image of the Divine Goodness, and therefore the work which with so much cheerfulness and vigour they employ themselves in, is to be *ministering spirits for the good of the elect*, to bring men to Goodness, and to encourage, and assist, and comfort them in

~ in well-doing. And our blessed Lord,  
Vol. XI. when he was upon Earth, did in nothing shew himself more like *the son of God*, than in *going about doing good*. And the wonderful works which he did, gave testimony of his Divinity, not so much as they were acts of Power as of Goodness, and wrought for the Benefit and Advantage of men. And the true Advantage of Greatness, and Wealth, and Power, does not consist in this, that it sets men above others, but that it puts them in a capacity of doing more good than others. Men are apt to call them their *bettors*, who are higher and richer than themselves; but in a true and just esteem of things, they only are our *bettors* who do more good than we. From the meanest Creature below us, up to God himself, they are the best and happiest and most perfect Beings, who are most useful and beneficial to others, who have the most power and the strongest inclinations to do good.

III. *To give*, that is, to be beneficial and to do good to others, hath the happiness of a great reward. There is

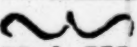
no Grace or Virtue whatsoever, which hath in Scripture the encouragement of more and greater Promises than this, of Happiness in general; of temporal Happiness in this life; of Happiness at death; and of everlasting Happiness in the World to come.

I. For Promises of Happiness in general. *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever, that is, shall never be forgotten, shall not pass unrewarded. Prov. 14. 21. He that giveth to the poor, happy is he. Matth. 5. 7. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Luke 6. 38. Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom: for with the same measure that ye meet withal, it shall be measured to you again; that is, according to our Goodness and Compassion towards others, we must expect to find the Charity of men, and the Compassions of God towards us. Job speaks as if some eminent and peculiar Blessing did attend and follow acts of*  

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Charity,



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Charity,

Charity, Job 25. 19. *The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me.*

2. Promises of temporal Happiness in this life. Psal. 37. 3. *Trust in the Lord, and do good : so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* Prov. 28. 27. *He that giveth to the poor, shall not lack.* Nay; God hath promised to have a particular respect to such as do good, in every condition, and all kinds of troubles that befall them. Psal. 41. 1, 2, 3. *Blessed is he that considereth the poor : the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth ; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing : thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*

3. Of Happiness in death. *The righteous, saith Solomon, Prov. 14. 32. hath hope in his death.* By the righteous in Scripture is frequently meant the merciful and good man. And so it is



to be understood, as appears from the Context, *He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his maker: but he that honoureth him, hath mercy upon the poor. The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.* If God design to send calamities upon the earth, upon the place where the good Man lives, which it would grieve him to see, or which he might be involved in, so as either to make his life uncomfortable, or to cut him off by a violent death; God considers the merciful Man, and removes him out of the way, into a better and safer place, *Esa. 57. 1. The merciful man is taken away from the evil to come.*

4. The Promises of eternal Life and Happiness in the World to come. *Luke 14. 13, 14. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind: and thou shalt be blessed. For they cannot recompence thee: for thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the just.* And Chap. 16. 9. *And I say unto you, says our Lord, Make to your selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that is,*

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to do good with what you have, *that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18, 19. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches ; but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy : that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* And the more to fix upon our minds the necessity of doing of good, especially in ways of Mercy and Charity, our Lord represents this, as the great matter of enquiry at the great day of Judgment, How they have behaved themselves in this kind, What good they have done, or omitted and neglected to do ; especially to those who were in misery and want ; and as if the sentence of eternal happiness or misery would accordingly pass upon them. And this methinks should make a mighty impression upon us, to think that when we shall appear before the great Judge of the World, we are to expect

expect mercy from him, according to the measure that we have shewed it to others. Serm. 10

And now if men be thoroughly convinced of the happiness of this Temper, methinks it should be no difficult matter to perswade them to it. If we believe this Saying of our Lord, that *It is more blessed to give, than to receive;* let us do accordingly.

I know that to carnal and earthly minded men, this must needs seem a new and wrong way to Happiness. For if we may judge of mens perswasions by their practice, (which seems to be a reasonable and good sure way of judging) I am afraid it will appear, that few believe this to be the way to Happiness. If we mind the course of the World, and the actions of men, it is but too evident that most men place their greatest felicity in receiving and getting the good things of this World; almost all seek *their own things, and but few the good of others. Many say, who will shew us? who will do us any good?* but few



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ask that question, *What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* And when our Lord tells men that they must *give to the poor*, if they would have *treasure in heaven*; that they must be Charitable, if they would be happy; that *It is a more blessed thing to give, than to receive*; these are sad and melancholy Sayings to those who have great possessions; and most men are ready with *the young man* in the Gospel, to part with our Lord, and to break with him upon these terms.

But let us remember, that this was *the Saying of our Lord Jesus*, whom we all profess to believe, and to imitate in all things: but more especially let us do so in this, because it was not a bare speculation, a fine and glorious Saying, like those of the Philosophers, who said great and glorious things, but did them not; but this was his constant practice, the great work and business of his life. He who pronounced it the most blessed thing to do good, spent his whole life in this work, and *went about doing good.*  
To

To this end all his activity and endeavours were bent. This was the life which God himself, when he was pleased to become Man, thought fit to lead in the World, *giving us herein an example, that we should follow his steps.* He made full tryal and experience of the Happiness of this Temper and Spirit ; for he was all on the giving hand. He would receive no portion and share of the good things of this World ; he refused the greatest offers. When the people would have made him a King, he withdrew and hid himself ; he was contented to be worse accommodated than the Creatures below us. *The Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests : but the son of Man had not where to lay his head.* He would not so much as have any fix'd abode and habitation, that he might be at liberty *to go about doing good.* He received nothing but injuries and affronts, base and treacherous usage from an ungrateful World, to whom he was so great and so universal a benefactor. The whole business of his life was *to do good, and to suffer evil for so doing.* So fix'd and

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steady was he to his own Principle and Saying, *It is a more blessed thing to give, than to receive.* He gave away all that he had to do us good, he parted with his glory and his life, *emptied himself, and became of no reputation; and being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.*

So that he adviseth us nothing, but what he did himself; nor imposeth any thing upon us, from which he himself desired to be excused. And surely we have great reason to be in great love with this pattern, when that very Goodness which he Propounds to our imitation, was all laid out upon us, and redounds to our Benefit and Advantage; when our Salvation and Happiness are the effects of that Goodness and Compassion which he exercised in the World. He did it all purely for our sakes: whereas all the good we do to others, is a greater good done to our selves.

So that here is an Example and Experiment

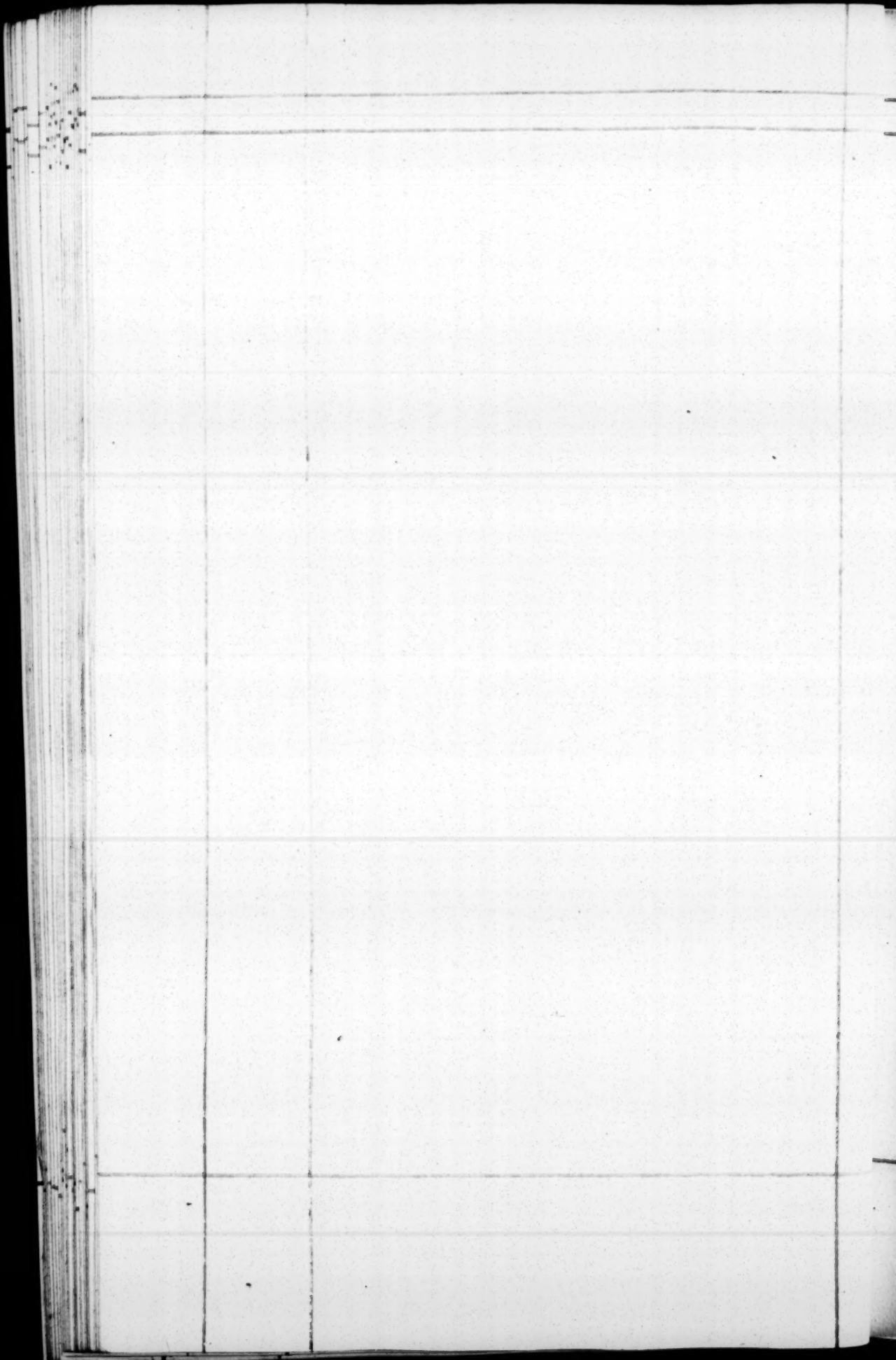


periment of the thing in the greatest and most famous instance that the whole World can afford. The best and happiest Man that ever was, the Son of God and the Saviour of Men, and who is the most worthy to be the Pattern of all Mankind, *went about doing good*, and governed his whole life, and all the actions of it by this Principle, that *It is more blessed to give, than to receive. Let the same mind be in us that was in Jesus Christ: let us go and do likewise.*

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S E R-



# SERMON XI.

The Evil of Corrupt Communication.

EPHES. IV. 29.

*Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth ; but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace to the hearers.*

**A**S Discourses against Sin and Vice in general are of great use, so it is likewise very necessary to level them against the particular Vices of men, and to endeavour by proper  
and



and intrinsecal Arguments, taken from the nature of that Vice we treat of, to dissuade and deter them from it; because this carries the discourse home to the Consciences of Men, and leaves them no way of escape. For this reason, and in compliance with their Majesties pious Proclamation, for the discountenancing and suppressing of Prophaneness and Vice, I have chosen to treat upon this subject, of corrupt and filthy Communication, as being one of the reigning Vices of this wicked and adulterous Generation; of the evil whereof the generality of men are less sensible than almost of any other, that is so frequently and so expressly branded in Scripture. And to this purpose I have pitched upon the words which I have read unto you, as containing a plain and express Prohibition of this Vice, *Let no corrupt Communication, &c.*

I remember St. *Austin* in one of his Epistles tells us, that *Tully* the great Master of the Art of speaking, says of one of the great Orators, *Nullum unquam verbum quod revocare vellet, emisit.*  
*That*

*That no word ever fell from him, that he could wish to have recalled. This I doubt is above the perfection of humane Eloquence, for a man always to make such a choice of his words, and to place them so fitly, that no thing he ever said could be changed for the better. But the greatest faults of speech are not those which offend against the Rules of Eloquence; but of Piety and Virtue, and good Manners: and who can say that his Tongue is free from all fault in this kind, and no word ever proceeded from him, which he could wish to have recalled. In many things, says St. James, Chap. 3. 2. we offend all; and in this kind as much perhaps, and as often as in any. He is a good and a happy man indeed, that seldom or never offends with his Tongue. If any man, as St. James goes on, offend not in word, the same is a perfect man; that is, He hath attained to an eminent degree of Virtue indeed, and is above the common rate of men, and may reasonably be presumed blameless in the general course of his life and practice; and able, as it follows,*

to

*to bridle the whole Body ; that is, to order his whole Conversation aright.*

To govern the Tongue is a matter of great difficulty, and consequently of great Wisdom, and Care, and Circumspection ; and therefore one of the great endeavours of a wise and good man, should be to govern his words by the Rules of Reason and Religion ; and we should every one of us resolve and say, as *David* does, *Psal. 39. 1. I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.* For as the Virtues, so the Vices of the Tongue are many and great. In respect of the Virtues of it, *David* calls it, *the best member we have* ; because of all the Members and Instruments of the Body, it is capable of giving the greatest glory to God ; and of doing the greatest Good and Benefit to men. And in respect of the Vices of it, it may be as truly said to be *the worst member that we have* ; because it is capable of doing the greatest dishonour to God, and the greatest mischief and harm among Men. So that upon all accounts,



counts, we ought to have a great care of the government of our Tongue, which is capable of being so useful and serviceable to the best and worst purposes, according as we restrain it and keep it in order, or let it loose to sin and folly. Serm. 11

And among all the Vices of the Tongue, as none is more common, so none is more misbecoming, and more contrary to the modesty of a man, and the gravity of a Christian, than filthy and obscene talk; of the odious Nature, and the evil and mischievous Consequences whereof, both to our selves and others, I design by God's assistance to treat at this time, from the words which I have read unto you, *Let no corrupt Communication, &c.*

That by *corrupt* or *rotten Communication*, is here meant filthy and obscene talk, is generally agreed among Interpreters. By *that which is good to the use of edifying*, is meant such discourse, as is apt to build us up in Knowledge and Goodness, do make the hearers wiser and better. *That*  
*it*

~ it may minister Grace unto the hearers,  
 Vol. XI. that is, such kind of discourse as is  
 acceptable to all ; not nauseous and  
 offensive to sober and virtuous per-  
 sons, not apt to grate upon chaste and  
 modest ears, and to put the hearers  
 out of countenance.

So that the Apostle doth here strictly forbid all lewd and filthy discourse amongst Christians; and enjoyns them so to converse with one another, that all their discourses may minister mutual benefit and advantage to one another, and tend to the promoting of Piety and Virtue; and may likewise be grateful to the hearers, carefully avoiding every thing that may put them to the blush, or any ways trespass upon Modesty and good Manners, as all filthy Communication does.

This sort of Argument, tho' it be frequently mentioned in Scripture, yet it is very seldom treated of in the Pulpit, because it is a matter hard to be handled in a cleanly manner, and the Preacher must always  
 take

take good heed to himself, that his discourse be free from the contagion of that Vice, which he reproveth and designs to correct and cure. And therefore to dissuade and deter men from this evil practice, so rife and common in the World, and that not only amongst the prophane and dissolute sort of Persons, but those likewise who would seem to be more strict and religious, I hope it may be sufficient to all considerate Persons, plainly to represent to them the heinous nature of the thing it self, together with the evil and dangerous consequences of it, both to our selves and to others. And this I shall endeavour to do in the most general and wary terms, keeping all along, as much as is possible, aloof and at a distance from any thing that might either offend the chaste and modest, or infect lewd and dissolute minds, which like tinder are always ready to take fire at the least spark.

Having premised this in general, my work at this time shall be to offer such particular Considerations, as

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may



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may fully convince men of the great evil and danger of this practice; and I hope may effectually prevail with them to leave it, and break it off. And they shall be these following.

I. That all filthy and corrupt communication is evidently contrary to Nature, which is careful to hide and suppress, whatever in the general esteem of the sober part of Mankind hath any thing of turpitude and uncomeliness in it: And wherever Nature hath thought fit to draw a vail, we should neither by words nor actions expose such things to open view. *Quæ natura occultavit*, says Tully, *de Offic. Lib. 1. eadem omnes, qui sana sunt mente remonent ab oculis*, Those things which Nature hath thought fit to hide, all men that are in their wits endeavour to keep out of sight. *Nos autem naturam sequamur*, says the same excellent Moralist, *ibid. Et ab omni quod abhorret ab oculorum auriumque approbatione fugiamus*, Let us, says he, follow Nature, and flee every thing that is offensive either to the eye or ear of men. And this is so plain a lesson of Nature,

Nature, that an Actor in a Play will never fall into that absurdity, as to represent a grave and virtuous person offering any obscene or immodest word: And as the same Author reasons, *Histrionem hoc videbit in scena, quod non videbit sapiens in vita?* Shall an Actor see this to be improper upon the Stage, and a wise man not discern the absurdity and undecency of it in his life and conversation?

II. All corrupt and filthy Communication is a notorious abuse of one of the greatest and best Gifts which God hath given us, and does directly contradict the natural end and use of Speech. Our Tongue is our Glory, as the holy Psalmist often calls it, who had duly considered the excellency and use of this faculty, and took great care to employ it to the purposes to which God gave it, and is herein an admirable Pattern to us.

And next to our Reason and Understanding, our Speech does most remarkably distinguish us from the Beasts, and sets us above them. *Hec*

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*uno præstamus vel maxime feris, quod colloquimur inter nos, & quod exprimere dicendo sensa possumus*, says the great Roman Orator, Cicero de Orat. Lib. 1. *By this one thing we excel the beasts in a very high degree, that we can talk together, and by speech declare our minds to one another.* By our Understandings we know God, and by our Tongues we confess and praise him: but to use our Tongues to lewd and filthy Discourse, is to pervert and abuse one of the best and noblest faculties, which God hath given us; it is to affront him with his own gifts, and to fight against him with his own weapons. *Do we thus requite the Lord? foolish creatures and unthankful!*

The two great Ends for which this faculty of Speech is given us, are to glorifie God our Maker, and to edifie Man our Neighbour: but all *corrupt communication* contradicts both these Ends; because, instead of praising God with pure hearts and lips, we do greatly dishonour him, by polluting our tongues with lewd and filthy talk: For hereby we offer a direct affront  
to



*to the use and end of Speech.*

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Serm. 11

to his holy Nature and Laws. This renders us altogether unfit for the Worship and Service of Almighty God, who is of *purser eyes than to behold iniquity* and impurity, in any kind. For how can we think that he will accept those Prayers and Praises, which are offer'd to him by such impure and unhallowed lips? when we dishonour God with the same mouth, that we pretend to glorifie him? and commit sin with the same tongue that we confess it? How can we hope that he will accept the Sacrifice of such polluted lips, out of which proceed things so contrary and inconsistent?

Those who thus pervert the use of Speech, and instead of glorifying him who gave them this excellent gift, and setting forth his praise, defile their tongues with filthy and impure language, give just occasion to complain of them, as *Elihu* does of the wicked in his time, *Job* 35. 10, 11. *None saith, where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night? Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the*

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*earth,*

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*earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.* His meaning is, that they did not glorifie God their Maker, by singing his Praises, which by being endued with this noble faculty of Speech, (which he had denied to the Creatures below Man, the Beasts and Birds,) they only were capable of performing. The consideration of this high priviledge, by which we do so much excel the Creatures below us, ought to be a mighty obligation upon us, to employ this gift of God in the service, and to the glory of the giver, and make us very careful not to offend him by it, or by any defilement of it, to render it unfit for one of the principal uses for which God bestowed it upon us.

Another great End of Speech is to edifie our Neighbour. So the Apostle here tells us in the Text, that nothing should *proceed out of our mouths*, but what is good for the use of edifying, *that it may minister grace to the hearers.* But instead of that, corrupt Communication offends the chaste and virtuous, and corrupts them who have  
vicious

vicious inclinations, by exciting and cherishing lewd imaginations in them, and making *them that are filthy more filthy still.*

Serm. II

III. Corrupt Communication is an Evidence of a corrupt and impure heart, as polluted streams are a sign that the Fountain is impure from whence they came. An impure mind may be covered and disguis'd by natural shame and outward reverence, in regard to the Company, or from some other particular design; but when it breaks out at any time in lewd talk, our Speech betrays us, and discovers the inward thoughts of our hearts, and makes them visible to every eye. For as our Saviour says, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* Matth. 12. 34. 25. *How can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.*



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There is not, says an excellent Divine of our own, Dr. Barrow, a more certain sign of a mind utterly debauch'd from piety and virtue, than affecting such talk. A vain mind naturally venteth it self in frothy discourse; and lust boiling within, foams out in filthy talk. It is St. Jude's Metaphor, when he describes that impure Sect of the Gnosticks, he says of them, that *they were continually foaming out their own shame*, ver. 13. that is by their lewd words and deeds they discovered the inward filthiness of their hearts. And therefore it is Tully's advice to him that would be perfectly virtuous, and not defective in any part of his Duty, *Imprimis provideat, ne sermo vitium aliquod indicet inesse moribus; de Offic. lib. 1.* Let him in the first place, says he, take great care, that his speech betray not some vice or fault in his manners. Ἀνδρὺς χαρακτὴρ ἐκ λόγου γιναίσκεται, A man's character is commonly taken from his talk; διὸ ὁ τερεπτοῦ, τοῦτο καὶ ὁ λόγος, says Aristides, such as are the manners of a man, such is his discourse; and Quintilian, Lib. II. c. I. Profert enim

of an impure heart.

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*enim mores plerumque oratio, & animi secreta detegit; nec sine Causa Græci prodiderunt, ut vivit, quemquam etiam dicere. Our speech, for the most part, declares our manner, and discovers the secrets of our hearts; so that not without cause was it become a proverbial saying among the Greeks, that, As the man lives, so also he speaks. And to the same purpose the wise Son of Sirach, Eccles 27. 6, 7. The fruit declareth, if the tree hath been dressed; so is the utterance of a conceit in the heart of man. Praise no man before thou hearest him speak: for this is the tryal of men. And ver. 13. The discourse of fools is irksome, and their sport is in the wantonness of sin.*

Serm. 11

Immodest Speech is not only an indication of an unchast mind; but draws likewise a great suspicion upon a Man's life. So strict a connexion commonly is there between a Man's thoughts and words, and between his words and actions, that they are generally presumed to be all of a piece, and agreeable to one another.

IV. Cor-

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IV. Corrupt Communication doth debauch and defile the minds of men, and that not only of the speaker, but likewise of the hearer of such Discourse ; because it gratifies and feeds a corrupt humour, and a vitiated appetite, beside that it disposeth and inclines to lewd and filthy actions: A smutty tongue and unchaste deeds, are seldom far asunder, and do very often go together ; for filthy talk and lewd practices seem only to differ in the occasion and opportunity ; and he that makes no Conscience of the one, will hardly stick at the other, when it can be done with secrecie and safety. The Law of God forbids both alike, and his eye beholds both ; *For there is not a word in my tongue, says David, Psal. 139. 4. but thou, O Lord ! knowest it altogether.* So that whatever may deter us from lewd practice (the authority of God forbidding it, or the awe of his presence, who continually stands by us, and hears and sees all that we say and do) is of equal force to restrain us from lewd and filthy words: for they both proceed



ceed from the same ill disposition of mind, and are done in equal contempt of the Divine Presence and Authority.

Serm. I.

V. It is uncivil and unmannerly, very disagreeable and highly displeasing to all sober and modest persons. It is a clownish and rude thing, says Tully, *de offic. lib. 1. Si rerum turpitudini adhibetur verborum obscœnitas, if to things which are immodest in themselves, we add the obscenity of words.*

Nothing that trespasses upon the modesty of the Company, and the decency of Conversation, can become the mouth of a Wise and Virtuous Person. This kind of Conversation would fain pass for wit among some sort of persons, to whom it is acceptable; but whatever favours of rudeness and immodesty, and ill manners, is very far from deserving that name; and they that are sober and virtuous, cannot entertain any discourse of this kind with approbation and acceptance: A well-bred person will never offend in this way; and therefore

*Corrupt Communication, a defiance*

fore it cannot but be esteem'd as an affront to modest company, and a rude presuming upon their approbation, impudently taking it for granted that all others are as lewd and dissolute as themselves.

This sort of Conversation was not only *offensive* to righteous *Lot*, but was a perpetual *vexation* to him, and grieved him at his very heart. So *St. Peter* tells us, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. that *Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. In seeing and hearing, that is, in seeing their lewd actions, and hearing their filthy talk, his life became a burden to him; and therefore God singled him out, and delivered him both from that wicked Company, and from that dreadful Judgment of fire and brimstone, which came down from Heaven upon them, and consumed them with an utter destruction, for an Example to all Ages, and an admonition to all Good Men, that they ought to be*

be in like manner affected, as *righteous Lot* was, with *the filthy Conversation of the wicked.* Serm. 11

VI. As by this practice we offend against Nature and Reason and true Morality ; so it is likewise a direct contempt and defiance of the Christian Religion, which does so strictly forbid, and so severely condemn it in Christians. Our Blessed Saviour seems more particularly to censure and condemn this Vice, when he says, *Matth. 12. 36, 37. That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of Judgment. Every idle word, ῥῆμα ἄερον, every vain and unprofitable word, that no ways tends to edification ; that is the very lowest sense the words can bear. But then how much more shall we give an account in that day of every lewd word, which tends to corrupt and debauch the Minds and Manners of Men. Some Copies have it, ῥῆμα πονηρὸν, every naughty and wicked word, every false and malicious, and calumniating word :*



Vol. XI. word: "An idle word, says St. Basil,  
 " is that which is not for edification,  
 " all such words shall come under Exa-  
 " mination in that great Assembly of  
 " the whole World; and what then  
 " says he, shall be done to words of  
 " Scurility and Calumny, and Obscen-  
 " ity ?

But that which will best direct us  
 to the meaning of this Phrase, is  
 what the Jewish Masters observ'd,  
 that by an idle word the Jews did  
 commonly understand *immodest and  
 unchaste speech, scurrilous and obscene  
 words*. And then it follows, *for by thy  
 words thou shalt be justified, and by thy  
 words thou shalt be condemned*. Men are  
 commonly apt to make a very light  
 matter of such words; but because  
 they shew the Mind and Manners of  
 the man, his inward Temper and  
 Disposition, therefore men shall be  
 called to a strict account for them in  
 the day of Judgment, and be con-  
 demned for lewd and dissolute words,  
 as well as for acts of filthiness and  
 uncleanness; because *these come from  
 the heart and defile the Man*, they pro-  
 ceed

ceed from an impure Spring and Fountain; and tho' we only perceive them to come out of the mouth, yet they proceed *out of the abundance of the heart*, from an evil disposition of mind.

Serm. II

So that our Judge hath expressly warned us of this fault, and declared to us the danger of it. And therefore whosoever believes this Declaration of our Saviour, and dreads the Judgment of the Great Day, ought to take heed that he offend not with his Tongue, in this or any other kind. Men make but little account of such words now, but they shall all be strictly accounted for another day; and what we utter now so freely and without blushing, will then strike us dumb, and be matter of greatest shame and confusion to us, in the presence of God and his holy Angels.

And so St. *Paul* likewise, not only here in the Text, does forbid and reprove this practice, when he says, *Let no corrupt Communication proceed*  
out

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out of your mouth: but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers: but in several other places of his Epistles, he most severely condemns it, as utterly misbecoming Christians, and most directly contrary to our most holy Profession. *Ephes. 5. 3, 4. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.* Here he forbids all lewd and filthy talk, as utterly misbecoming the Conversation of Christians, who should give no occasion to have the Vices of this Nature so much as once mentioned, much less practised amongst Christians; *Let not these things, says he, be once named among you, as becometh Saints: but rather giving of thanks.* Here he directs us to that which is the proper employment of the Tongue, and one of the chief ends of speech; which is to praise and glorifie God, and not to dishonour him by lewd and filthy talk. And this he urgeth again, as the proper fruit



*fruit of our lips. v. 20. Giving thanks  
always for all things unto God and the  
Father, in the Name of our Lord Je-  
sus Christ.*

Serm. 11

And then at the 5. v. of this Chap. he appeals to Christians, whether they had not been constantly taught and instructed, that all lewdness and filthiness, not only in act but in word, will certainly shut men out of the Kingdom of Heaven. *For this,* says he, *ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person,* (referring to those several sorts of uncleanness he had mentioned before; among which is *filthy and foolish talk,*) *hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God.* The Apostle here speaks to the Gentile Christians, who were newly converted from Heathenism, and had been accustomed to make slight of these kinds of sin, which were so common among the Idolatrous Heathen, and part of the Worship of their obscene Deities: but he tells them, that the Christian Religion, which they had embraced, required another sort of Conversa-  
Y tion,

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tion, and did strictly enjoyn all manner of purity, both of heart and life, in all our words and actions; and that *as he that has called us is holy, so we should be holy in all manner of Conversation.* And what ever false Teachers might insinuate, as if the Christian Religion did allow a greater liberty in these things, and made that *a cloak for licentiousness*, hereby *turning the grace of God, that is the Doctrine of the Gospel, into lasciviousness*, as St. Jude speaks, *ver. 4.* yet they would certainly find things quite otherwise in the issue, and that God, who punished the Heathen for these Vices, and sent such terrible Judgments upon them, would much less let Christians go unpunished, that should be found guilty of them, *Ephes. 5. 6. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience*, that is the Heathen world, who continued still in their infidelity, and liv'd in the practice of those sins; and would fall much more heavily upon Christians, if after they had embraced this

this holy Religion, they should allow themselves in any of those vile and impure practices, which they had been guilty of before, and which they had so solemnly promised to renounce and put off in their Baptism.

And so likewise, *Coloss. 3. 5, 6, 7.* *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience, or unbelief; in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them, that is, whilst ye were Heathens, and conversed among them, ye practised these Vices: but now, that is, now that you are become Christians, put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, evil-speaking, filthy communication.* Ye see that *filthy communication* is reckoned amongst those sins of the Gentiles, which Christians were utterly to quit and forsake, as contrary to the purity of the Christian Profession. And so St. Paul



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And so likewise, Coloss. 3. 5, 6, 7. *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience, or unbelief; in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them, that is, whilst ye were Heathens, and conversed among them, ye practiced these Vices: but now, that is, now that you are become Christians, put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, evil-speaking, filthy communication. Ye see that filthy communication is reckoned amongst those sins of the Gentiles, which Christians were utterly to quit and forsake, as contrary to the purity of the Christian Profession. And so St. Paul*

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tells the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thes.* 4. 7. *God hath not called us unto uncleanness ; but unto holiness.* And he gives the same Precept to the *Colossians*, Chap. 4. 6. *Let your speech be always with grace, that is, acceptable and useful, something that is worthy the hearing, seasoned with salt, that is, with prudence and discretion, which should always govern our speech, and keep it within the bounds of sobriety and modesty. As our talk should not be insipid and foolish, so much less rotten and unsavoury, immodest and lewd.*

And in his *Epist.* to the *Philippians*, Chap. 4. 8. he earnestly recommends the Virtues that are directly contrary to this Vice. *Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are honest, ὅσα σπουδαία whatsoever things are grave or venerable, ὅσα ἀγνά, whatsoever things are pure or chaste, think on these things ; that is, have great regard to them in your Conversation and Behaviour, there being no sort of Virtue which the Christian Religion does not strictly enjoin and exact from us ; and consequently*



frequently whatsoever is light and frothy, and much more whatever is lewd and filthy, ought to be banished from the Conversation of Christians, as utterly inconsistent with the gravity and purity of that holy Profession.

And the same Apostle tells us, that all the Promises of the Gospel are so many arguments and obligations to purity and holiness. 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises (dearly beloved) let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting, or practising, holiness in the fear of God.* And on the contrary St. John tells us, that all impurity will be an effectual barr to our entrance into Heaven. Revel. 21. 27. speaking of *the new Jerusalem*, says he, *There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination.* So that if either the Promises or Threatnings of the Gospel have any influence upon us, they will effectually restrain this vicious practice.

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VII. and *Lastly*, All impure and filthy Communication grieves the *holy Spirit*, and drives him away from us. And therefore after he had forbidden this Vice here in the Text, that *no corrupt Communication* proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers; he immediately adds, and grieve not the *holy spirit of God*, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption; hereby intimating, that all corrupt and filthy Communication grieves the *holy spirit of God*, that blessed spirit which is the seal and earnest of our redemption, that is, as the Apostle himself explains it, of the redemption of our bodies from the bondage of corruption, by the resurrection of them to eternal life. For it is the Spirit of God dwelling in us, which shall raise our bodies at the last day, and make them partakers of a blessed immortality. So the Apostle says expressly, *Rom. 8. 11. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit*

*Spirit that dwelleth in you.* If we de-  
 file our bodies, or any members of  
 them by uncleanness, we grieve the  
*Spirit of God which dwells in us*, and  
 force him out of his habitation ; that  
 blessed Spirit, which should quicken  
 our mortal bodies, and is both the ear-  
 nest and the cause of their Resurrection  
 to eternal life. For our Bodies as well  
 as our Souls are the temples of the holy  
 Ghost, and the Spirit of God dwells in  
 them ; and we banish him out of his  
 Temple, whenever we prophane it by  
 lewd and filthy Speech.

Serm. 11

And the Apostle useth this Argument  
 more than once, to deter Christians  
 more especially from the sins of un-  
 cleanness. 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. *Know ye  
 not that ye are the temple of God, and  
 that the Spirit of God dwelleth in  
 you ? If any man defile the temple of  
 God, him shall God destroy. For the  
 temple of God is holy, which temple ye  
 are. The holy Spirit of God sanctifi-  
 eth the place where he more especi-  
 ally resides, and makes it his temple ;  
 and so are our Bodies as well as our  
 Souls ; as the same Apostle expressly*



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tells us, *Chap. 6. Ver. 18, 19, 20.* where he argues against the sins of uncleanness, which are committed in the Body, and by the members and instruments of it, from this consideration, that *our bodies are the temples of the holy Ghost.* *Flee fornication,* says he. *Every sin that a man doth, is without the body: but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body; that is, the body is not the immediate instrument of other sins, as it is of those of uncleanness; and then it follows, What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy Ghost that is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorifie God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* Under the name of *Fornication* the Apostle comprehends all the sins of uncleanness, of which any member of the body is an instrument; so that the lasciviousness of the Eye, or Ear, or Tongue, is a polluting and prophaning this temple of God, and drives the holy Spirit of God out of his possession

And

And whenever the Spirit of God departs from us, we cease to be the Children of God, and forfeit the earnest of our eternal inheritance. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, says the same Apostle, Rom. 8. 9. he is none of his; that is, he does not belong to him; in plain English, he is no Christian.* So that as we would not forfeit the title of Christians, and the blessed hope of a glorious Resurrection, we must be very careful that *no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth, lest hereby we grieve the holy Spirit of God, by which we are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

I have now done with this Argument, and what I have said concerning immodest and unchast words, is of equal force against lascivious Books, and Pictures, and Plays; all which do alike intrench upon natural modesty, and for that reason are equally forbidden and condemned by the Christian Religion; and therefore it may suffice to have named them. I shall only speak a few words concerning  
Plays,

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Plays, which as they are now order'd among us, are a mighty reproach to the Age and Nation.

To speak against them in general, may be thought too severe, and that which the present age cannot so well brook, and would not perhaps be so just and reasonable; because it is very possible, they might be so framed and governed by such rules, as not only to be innocently diverting, but instructing and useful, to put some vices and follies out of countenance, which cannot perhaps be so decently reprov'd, nor so effectually expos'd and corrected any other way. But as the Stage now is, they are intolerable, and not fit to be permitted in a *civilized*, much less in a *Christian* Nation. They do most notoriously minister both to infidelity and vice. By the profaneness of them, they are apt to instil bad Principles into the minds of men, and to lessen that awe and reverence which all men ought to have for God and Religion: and by their lewdness they teach vice, and are apt to infect the minds



minds of men, and dispose them to  
lewd and dissolute Practices.

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And therefore I do not see how any Person pretending to Sobriety and Virtue, and especially to the pure and holy Religion of our Blessed Saviour, can without great guilt, and open contradiction to his holy Profession, be present at such lewd and immodest Plays, much less frequent them, as too many do, who yet would take it very ill to be shut out of the Communion of Christians, as they would most certainly have been in the first and purest Ages of Christianity.

To conclude this whole Discourse, Let us always remember, that Gravity and Modesty in all our behaviour and conversation, in all our words and actions, are duties indispensably required by the Christian Religion, and the great fences of Piety and Virtue; and therefore ought with great conscience and care to be preserved and kept inviolable: and when these fences are once broken down, there is a wide gap made for almost any sin  
and

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and Vice to enter in. Immodest words do naturally tend *to corrupt good manners*, both in our selves and others.

There is none of us, but would reckon it a very great Infelicity to be depriv'd of that noble and useful faculty of Speech, which is so peculiar to Man, and which, next to our Reason and Understanding, doth most remarkably distinguish us from the brute beasts: but it is a much greater unhappiness to have this faculty, and to abuse it to vile and lewd purposes. The first may be only our misfortune: but this can never be without great fault, and gross neglect of our selves; and much better had it been for us to have been born dumb, than thus *to turn our glory into shame and guilt*, by perverting this excellent gift of God, to the corrupting our selves and others.

This I hope may be sufficient to restrain men from this Vice, which I have all this while been speaking against; at least to preserve those which are not yet infected, from the contagion

gion of it ; and I hope to reclaim many from so bad a practice. And if any be so hardened in their lewd course, that no counsel of this kind can make impression on them, what remains, but to conclude in the words of the Angel to St. John, Revel. 22. *II. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

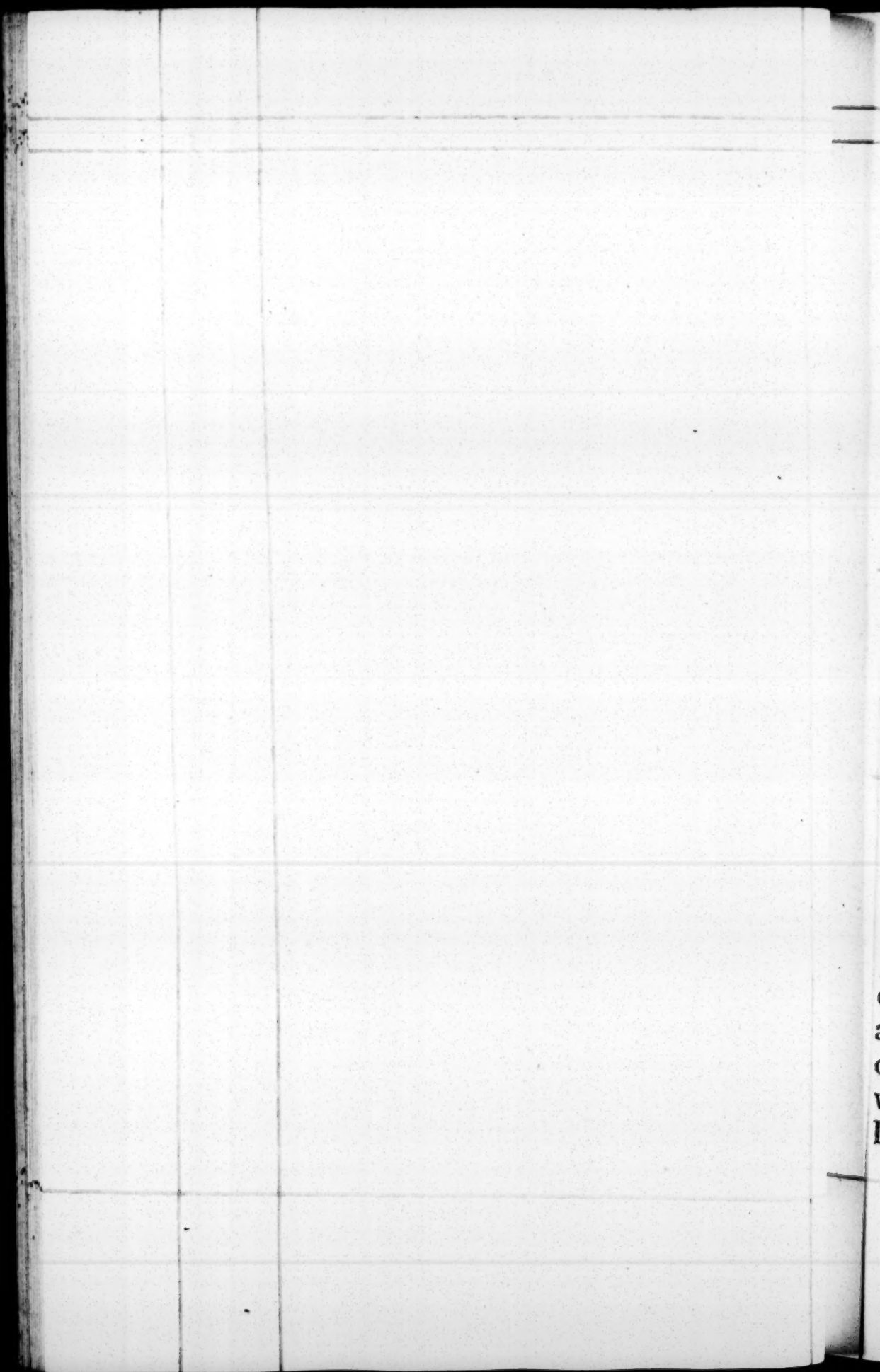
Serm. II

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# SERMON XII.

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The true Remedy against the  
troubles of life.

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The first Sermon on this Text.

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JOHN XIV. 1.

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*Let not your heart be troubled : ye be-  
lieve in God ; believe also in me.*

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**I**N which words our Blessed Sa-  
viour does, upon a particular oc-  
casion, prescribe an universal Remedy  
against Trouble. And the particular  
occasion of this consolatory Discourse,  
which our Saviour here makes to his  
Disciples, was this ; He had often  
told

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told them of his Sufferings ; but the conceit which they had entertained of his temporal reign, would not suffer them to admit any thought of such a thing, as the Sufferings or Death of the *Messias* ; and therefore it is said that *these things did not sink into them*, and that *they understood them not* ; men being generally very slow to understand what they do not like, and have no mind to. At last our Saviour tells them plainly, that how backward soever they were to believe it, the time of his Sufferings and Death was now approaching, that he should shortly be *betrayed into the hands of men*, and be *crucified and slain*. At this his Disciples were struck with great fear, and exceedingly troubled, both in contemplation of his Sufferings, and of their own invaluable loss. To comfort them upon this occasion, our Saviour directs his Disciples to that course, which was not only proper in their present case, but is an universal Antidote and Remedy against all trouble whatsoever, and will not only serve to mitigate our trouble, and support our Spirits under the fear and apprehen-



apprehension of future evils, but under present afflictions and sufferings ; and to quiet and comfort our minds under the saddest condition, and forest calamities that can befall us. *Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

He does not only forbid them to be troubled, and counsel them against it ; such advice is easily given, but not so easily to be followed : but he prescribes the proper Remedy against trouble, which is, Trust and Confidence in God the great Creator and wise Governour of the World ; and likewise in himself, the Blessed Son of God, and Saviour of Mankind. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

The words are variously translated ; by some indicatively, *Ye do believe in God, and ye do believe in me*, therefore *be not troubled* ; by others Imperatively, *Believe in God, and believe likewise in me* ; and then you can have no cause of trouble. Or else the first clause may be rendred indicatively, and the latter imperatively ; and so

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our Translation renders the words, *Ye do believe in God, believe also in me ; as you believe in God the Creator and Governour of the World, so believe also in me the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World.* But which way soever the words be render'd, the sense comes all to one ; that Faith in God, and in our Blessed Saviour, are here prescribed as the proper and most powerful Remedies against trouble. *Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

In the handling of these words I shall do these *two* things.

*First*, I shall consider what sort of trouble is here forbidden, or with what reasonable limitations this general prohibition of our Saviour is to be understood, *Let not your heart be troubled.*

*Secondly*, I shall endeavour to shew what Virtue and Force there is in the Remedy here prescribed by our Saviour, to mitigate and allay our Trouble,

Trouble, and to support and quiet our minds under it.

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*First*, We will consider what sort of Trouble is here forbidden, and with what due and reasonable limitations we are to understand this general Prohibition of our Saviour to his Disciples, *Let not your heart be troubled*. And this we shall best find out by considering the various objects of Trouble, together with the several causes or grounds of them. And these may all be ranged under these *three* heads; evils past, present, or to come. For the ground of all trouble is some evil, either really and in it self so, or what is apprehended by us under that notion: and the several kinds of Trouble, are either the reflection upon evils past, or the sense of an evil that is present, or the fear and apprehension of some future evil which threatens us and hangs over us.

I. For the *First*, The Trouble caused by reflection upon evils past, this must either be the evil of affliction or sin. The former of these, when it is past,



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is seldom any cause of Trouble, the remembrance of past Sufferings, and the Evils which we got over, being rather delightful than grievous; so that it is only the evil of sin, the reflection whereof is troublesome. And this is that which we call *guilt*, which is an inward vexation, and discontent and grief of mind, arising from the consciousness that we have done amiss, and a fearful apprehension of some vengeance and punishment that will follow it; and there is no trouble that is comparable to this, when the Conscience of a sinner is throughly awakened.

Now upon this account our hearts ought to be troubled, and we can hardly exceed in it, provided our trouble do not drive us to despair, but to Repentance: but there can be no suspicion that this comes within the compass of our Saviour's Prohibition.

II. As for the troubles caused by the sense of the present evils, either of loss or suffering, tho' this do properly

perly enough fall within the compass of our Saviour's Prohibition, *let not your heart be troubled*, yet it admits of several limitations; therefore in order to the fixing of its due and proper bounds, I shall briefly shew, what Trouble for present evils and afflictions which are upon us, is not forbidden, and what is.

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I. We are not here forbidden to have a just and due sense of any Evil or Calamity that is upon us; because this is natural, and we cannot help it; for there is a real difference of things in themselves; some things are in their Nature good and convenient for us, and agreeable and delightful to our senses; and other things are in themselves evil, that is naturally displeasing and grievous; and we must not only be *Stoicks*, but even *stocks and stones*, if we have not a just sense and resentment of this difference. Our Blessed Saviour had so; and as he was afflicted more than any Man, and suffer'd more than any of the Sons of Men, so was he likewise very sensible of his sufferings, and had a natural dread

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and horror of them ; in so much that he himself tells us, that *his Soul was exceeding sorrowful, even to death*, upon the apprehension of what he was to undergo ; which made him pray so earnestly, and to repeat that Petition so often, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.* Nay the very anguish of his mind, caused by the dread and horror of his Sufferings, was so great as to force his blood through the pores of his body, so that *he sweat as it were thick drops of blood falling upon the ground.*

And this is not to be wonder'd at, because our Blessed Saviour, as he had the greatest endowments of humane Nature in their greatest Perfection, so he had a perfect sense of the evils, and pains, and sufferings of it. And all Philosophy that will not acknowledge loss and pain and suffering, to be evils and troublesome and terrible, is either obstinate sullenness or gross hypocrisie.

2. Nor doth this Prohibition of our Saviour exclude natural affection.

This



*is not forbid by our Saviour.*

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This is a Plant which God himself hath planted in human Nature, and that for very excellent Ends and Purposes; and having made us Men, and endowed us with such passions, he does not expect that we should put off our Nature, and transform ourselves into another sort of Creatures than what we were when we came out of his own hands. To be *without natural affection*, and to have no afflictive sense of the loss of nearest Relations, is condemned in Scripture, a Mark of the greatest degeneracy and depravation of human Nature. And therefore we cannot imagine that our Saviour did intend to forbid such a moderate and well regulated degree of trouble upon these occasions, as is the proper and genuine issue of those natural affections, which God himself hath implanted in us.

3. When our Saviour forbids us to be troubled, he doth not forbid us to have a just sense of God's Judgments, or of his Hand, in procuring or permitting the Evils which befall us; much less of our own sins, which

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are the meritorious cause of them  
 nay on the contrary, he expects that we should acknowledge his Providence, and the justness of it, in his severest dealings with us ; that we should be *humbled under his mighty hand, and turn to him that smites us, and bear the indignation of the Lord patiently, because we have sinned against him*. Whatever is a sign of God's displeasure against us, is a just and reasonable cause of trouble to us.

But when our Saviour here forbids us to be troubled, he plainly intends to prohibit these *three* things.

I. Immoderate grief and sorrow for any present affliction or loss, without any restraint upon our selves, so as to let grief loose, and to give full scope to it, to let the reins fall out of our hands, so that the considerations of Reason and Religion have no manner of power and command over us ; to sorrow, as *Rachel* did for her *Children*, *refusing to be comforted*. This is unreasonable, and usually of pernicious consequence : for no  
 man

man knows, when he once abandons himself to melancholy, and gives way to grief, and lets it pierce his heart, and enter into his soul, how it may overwhelm his spirit, and sink it past recovery. And to this pitch, the trouble of some men for wordly losses and disappointments, because it was not restrained and governed at first, hath brought them; and it often happens, as St. Paul hath observed, that *the trouble of the world worketh death.*

I think hardly any man did ever die of grief for his sins, and killed himself by laying them to heart. It is well if our sorrow for sin proceed to that degree, as to work real repentance and amendment. And the reason why our sorrow for sin is commonly moderated and within bounds, is because the sorrow and trouble of repentance is always reasonable, and reason keeps our grief within bounds: but *the sorrow of the world*, that is of covetous and worldly minded men, who have unreasonably set their affections upon this World, hath nothing



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thing to set bounds and give limits to it. And therefore by the just Judgment of God, it sometimes proceeds so far as *to work death*. Many mens hearts have been broken for the loss of an Estate, or some great cross and disappointment in their worldly affairs and designs. Thus *Nabal*, upon the very apprehension of the danger that he and his estate were in, and had so narrowly escaped, was struck with grief to the degree of stupidity, so that *his heart died within him, and he became as a stone*; and in a few days he died of that grief.

2. We are not to be troubled for present afflictions and sufferings to the degree of impatience and discontent, so as to fret and murmur in our hearts against God, and *to charge him foolishly*, as if he dealt hardly with us, and had not a due regard for us, and an equal consideration of our case. For we are all sinners, and always deserve to suffer, and therefore whatever temporal evils befall the best men in this world, they are always *less than their iniquities have*

*is forbid by our Saviour.*

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*have deserved :* and yet men are very prone to censure and find fault with God, for the Evils and Calamities which they draw down upon themselves. So Solomon observes, *Prov. 19. 3. The foolishness of man perverteth his way ; and his heart fretteth against the Lord.* We suffer for our own sins and follies, and then are angry with God because we suffer. God is angry with us for our sins, and when he is angry with us, and *lifts up his hand against us*, it becomes us *to humble our selves under his mighty hand ; for who can stand before him when once he is angry ?* But we have no cause to fret against him, for the evils which we bring upon our selves : besides that fretting is not the way to relieve and ease us, but to vex and gall us the more.

3. As to the fear and apprehension of future evils, tho' we ought to have a just sense of them, yet we ought not to be dejected and troubled for them to the degree of despondency, so as to conclude our selves miserable and forsaken, utterly lost and  
undone,

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 Vol. XI. undone, and that our case is past all
 help and remedy: we should not be so
 dejected, as if we were destitute of all
 comfort, and utterly without hope.
 Hopes lies at the bottom of the worst
 condition; for while we are not *without*
God, who can never be *without hope*;
 so long as the Government of the
 worle is in so good hands, our case
 can never be desperate; and there-
 fore we ought to rebuke the despon-
 dency of our spirits, as *David* did,
Psal. 43. 5. Why art thou so cast down, O
my soul? and why art thou disquieted
within me? Hope in God. And we should
 support our selves in our greatest dan-
 gers and fears, as he did, *Psal. 3. 1,*
2, 3. Lord, how are they increased that
trouble me? how many are they that rise
up against me? Many there be which say
of my soul, There is no help for him in
God. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me,
my glory, and the lifter up of my head.

And this cause of trouble upon
 the fear and apprehension of future
 evils, was the case of the Disciples,
 who were mightily dejected and di-
 sturbed, upon the apprehension of the
 destitute

is forbid by our Saviour.

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destitute condition they should be in upon our Saviour's departure from them; that they should be exposed to a malicious world, without all manner of protection from those innumerable evils and dangers which threatned them. And this I shall have most particular respect to in my following Discourse, as being more particularly intended by our Saviour, and being one of the most common causes of trouble in this world. I proceed therefore in the

Second place to consider, what force there is in the Remedy here prescribed by our Saviour, to mitigate and allay our troubles, both in respect of our present evils and sufferings, and the danger and apprehension of future evils, and to support and comfort our minds under them. *Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

In which words our Saviour prescribes a double Remedy against trouble.

First,

Faith in God and Jesus Christ,

First, Faith in God, the great Creator and wise Governour of the World. *Ye believe in God*, or, *Believe ye in God*, to which he adds, in the

Second Place, Faith likewise in himself, the Son of God, and the Saviour of men. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*. Not as if Faith in God were not a sufficient ground of consolation and support to our minds ; but to acquaint us, that a firm Faith in him who is the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, would very much tend to confirm and strengthen our trust and confidence in God ; as will clearly appear, when I come to shew, what peculiar considerations of comfort and support the Christian Religion offers to us, beyond what the common light and reason of Mankind, from the consideration of the Divine Nature and Perfections, does suggest to us. And to explain the full strength and force of these *two* Considerations, I shall do these *two* things.

First,

First, I shall endeavour to shew, what Considerations of comfort and support the belief of a God, and the natural notions and acknowledgments of Mankind concerning him, do afford to good men for the allaying and mitigating of their Fears and Troubles. And,

Secondly, What farther Considerations Faith in Christ, and the firm belief of the Christian Religion, do afford to this purpose. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

First, To shew, what Considerations of comfort and support, the belief of a God, and the natural notions and acknowledgments of Mankind concerning him, do afford to good men for the allaying and mitigating of their Fears and Troubles; which I shall briefly deduce thus.

The firm belief and perswasion of a God, does necessarily infer the belief of his infinite Power, and Wisdom, and Holiness, and Goodness; for these
are

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are necessary and essential Perfections of the Divine Nature, without which we cannot conceive such a Being as God is. Now from these essential Perfections of the Divine Nature, these *two* Principles do naturally result.

I. That his Providence governs the World, and administers the affairs of it, particularly of Mankind, with great Goodness and Wisdom.

II. That his Providence is more peculiarly concerned for good men, and that he hath a very tender and particular care of them, and regard to them.

* See
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Serm. 8.

Now these *two* Principles, concerning which I have discours'd at large upon another occasion, * afford us this *fourfold* ground of comfort, under all the evils that we labour under, and are afraid.

I. If God govern the World, then we and all our interests and concerns are certainly in the best and
safest

safest hands ; and where, if we knew how to wish well and wisely for our selves, we should desire to have them ; and therefore why should our hearts be troubled at any thing that doth or can befall us ? *

Serm. 12

* See this matter

also handled at

large in the same

Sermon.

II. Another ground of comfort is, That if the Providence of God have a particular regard to good men, and favour for them, then we may be assured, that if we be careful of our duty to God, and rely upon his goodness, and refer our selves to his Pleasure, in the final issue and result of things, all shall turn to our good, and conspire in our Happiness : nay, if we make the best use of the evils and afflictions which befall us, and bear them as we ought, we our selves may do a great deal to turn them to our Benefit and Advantage ; to the bettering of our Minds, and the improvement of our Virtues, and the increase of our Reward. And why should we be troubled so much at things which may prove so many ways beneficial to us, if it be not our own fault ? which tend to our

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good,

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good, and will end in it, if we will but *let patience have its perfect work*, as St. James shews, Chap. 5. 11. in the instance of Job, whose admirable Patience had a glorious end and reward, even in this World ; *You have heard*, says he, *of the patience of Job, and of the end God made with him ; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.* Job upon a dunghil, is no whit inferiour to the most glorious Prince that ever sat upon a Throne. Some men have been more illustrious, and according to the true rate and value of things, more considerable for their Patience, and Courage, and Constancy of mind in great Afflictions and Sufferings, than the greatest pomp and prosperity of the World could possibly have made them. Some have born Poverty, and Sicknes, and Reproach, and Persecution, and exquisite Pain and Torments, with so much decency, with such greatness of mind, and firmness of resolution, as might justly provoke the envy of the greatest and wealthiest, and to all outward appearance, the happiest Persons that ever were in the World.

M. An-

M. Antoninus was an excellent good Man, and perhaps the greatest Emperor that ever was, for in his time the *Roman Empire* was at its greatest extent ; and yet it is hard to say, whether *Epicæetus*, whose example I proposed before, and who lived about the same time with this great and good Emperor, I say, it is not easie to say, whether this poor Man *Epicæetus*, who was deprest into the lowest and most afflicted condition, that human nature is almost capable of, were not, by reason of those admirable Virtues which shined so brightly in that dark and dismal condition, his invincible Patience, his perfect Submission to the Providence of God, the perpetual cheerfulness and serenity, the unmoveable constancy and equality of his mind, according to a right estimation of things, the greater and more glorious Person of the two.

So that good men are always secure, as to the main and the essentials of Happiness; under all outward afflictions and sufferings of the body, they may still retain a wise and virtuous

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mind, which is *that good part which cannot be taken from them* ; and if they retain that, they are sure of the Favour of God, and the Countenance of Heaven, which alone is sufficient to make any condition happy.

III. Another ground of comfort is, That if God govern the World, he can either prevent and divert the greatest evils that threaten us, or if they come upon us, he can support us under them, and deliver us out of them : And if we be good, and it be for our good, he will do one of these for us ; either he will prevent the evil, that it shall not come, if that be best for us ; or if affliction fall heavy upon us, he will support us under it ; and if our strength be increased in proportion to the weight of our burthen, it is as well as if he had escaped it, nay perhaps much better, considering the Benefit and the Reward of it. But how grievous soever it be, he can, when he pleaseth, deliver us from it ; and he will do it presently if it be for our good ; and if it be not, it is not really desirable

desirable to us to be so soon freed from it.

Serm. 12

IV. And *lastly*, which is consequent upon the former particulars, it is certain upon the whole matter, and upon the ballancing of all accounts, that in every condition good men have much more cause of comfort and joy, than of dejection and trouble. Let our fears be as great, and our present sufferings as heavy as they can, there are considerations of so great moment to be put in the other Scale, as will infinitely out-weigh them, and make them seem light. The consideration of our immortal duration in a future state, and of the endless and unspeakable happiness of another World, are of that solidity and weight, that *these light afflictions*, as the Apostle calls them, *which are but for a moment*, are *no-wise worthy to be compared with them*.

What tho' our passage through this World be never so stormy and tempestuous, we shall at last arrive at a safe Port. Heaven is a sure sanctuary and

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and retreat from all the evils and afflictions which we are liable to, and which many times pursue us so close in this mortal state. It is but exercising our Faith and Patience for a very little while, and all will be well with us ; much better than if we had never been afflicted, and had been wholly exempted from all sorts of sufferings in this World. We have no pretence to *the crown of life*, if we do not *overcome* ; and there can be no *conquest*, without some *conflict*.

But because the Christian Religion does give us the greatest, if not the only firm assurance of the Happiness of another life, which when all is done, is the great support and cordial of our fainting Spirits, under the troubles and afflictions of this life, therefore I shall not now enlarge farther upon it, but refer it to the *second* head of my Discourse, which I proposed to speak to in the next place, *viz.* What farther Considerations of comfort and support, Faith in Christ, and the firm belief of the Christian Religion does afford to good men, for the

a sure ground of comfort.

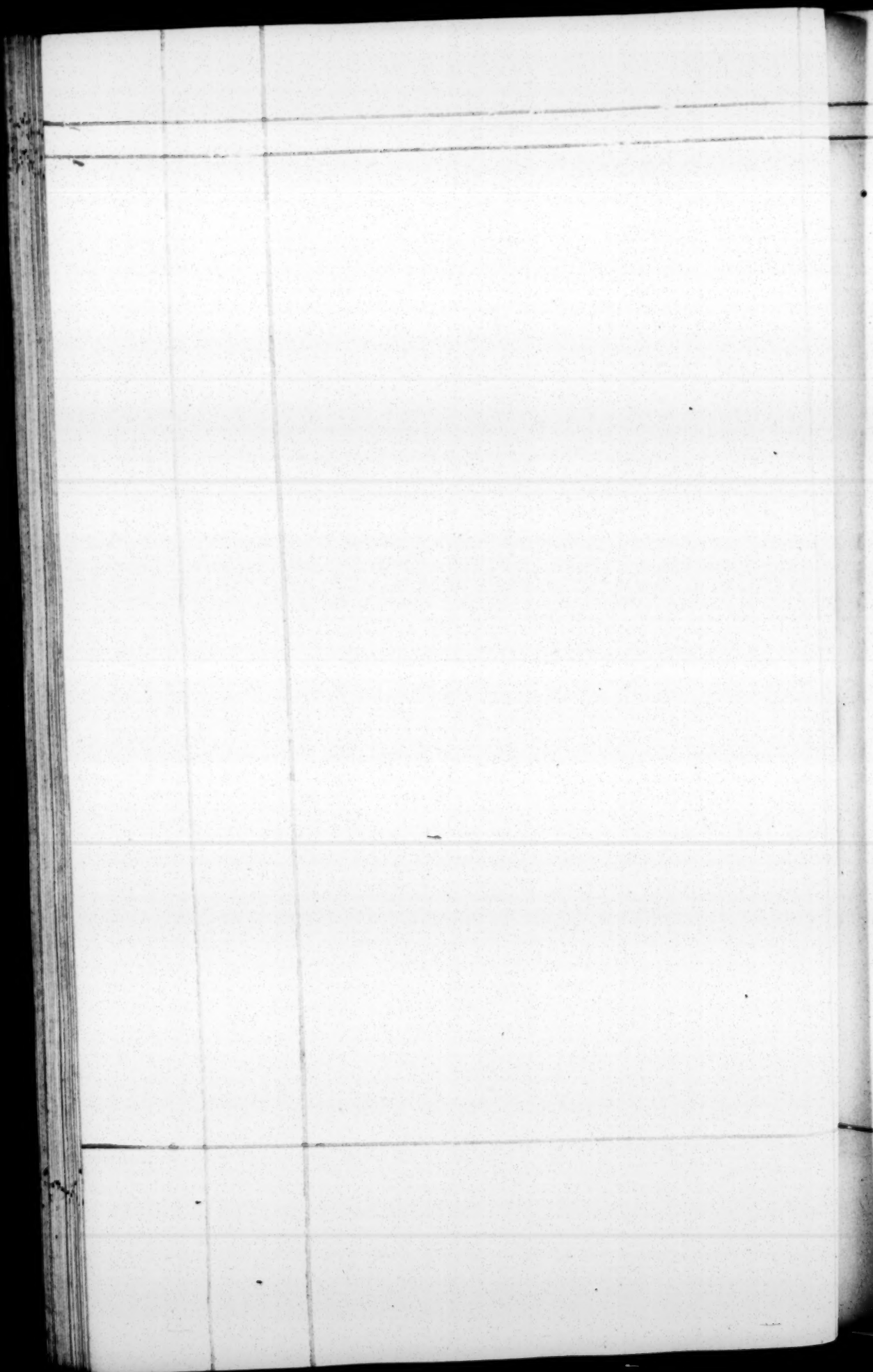
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the allaying and mitigating of their
Fears and Troubles. *Let not your heart*
be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe
also in me. But this I shall refer to
some other opportunity.

Serm. 12

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S E R.



SERMON XIII.

The true Remedy against the troubles of life.

The second Sermon on this Text.

JOHN XIV. 1.

Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God ; believe also in me.

I Have considered these words as an universal Remedy against Trouble : And in shewing what virtue and force there is in this Remedy, I have considered ;

First,

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First, That Faith in God is a proper and most powerful means to mitigate and allay our trouble, and to support and quiet our minds under it.

I now proceed in the *second* place to shew what farther Considerations of Comfort and Support, Faith in Christ, and the firm belief of the Christian Religion, do afford good men, for the allaying and mitigating of their greatest Fears and Troubles. *Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.* I shall mention these *five*.

I. Faith in Christ, or the belief of the Christian Religion, gives us full and perfect assurance of immortality, and of the glorious and eternal Rewards of another World.

II. It promiseth to every sincere Christian the inward Assistance, and Support, and Comfort of God's holy Spirit, to bear up the weakness of human Nature under its heaviest pressures

pressures of Fear, or Grief, or Pain.

Serm. 13

III. It assures us of the special efficacy of our Prayers with God, either for our deliverance from Trouble, or for the Aids and Supports of his Grace under it.

IV. It propounds to us the best and most admirable Pattern that ever was, of Patience and Constancy of mind under the apprehension of approaching evils, or the sense of present sufferings; and of a contented and cheerful submission to the Will of God, in the saddest condition to which human Nature is incident.

V. It assures us of a most compassionate, and prevalent, and perpetual Patron, and Advocate, and Intercessor with God for us.

I. Faith in Christ, or the Doctrine of the Christian Religion, gives us full and perfect assurance of Immortality, and of the glorious and eternal Rewards

Vol. XI. Rewards of another world. Of this the world was very doubtful and uncertain before, and had but obscure and wavering apprehensions about it. And tho' the generality of mankind had naturally some glimmering apprehensions of another life after this, and secret hopes and expectations of a future reward for good men that were hardly used in this world; yet the Philosophers had wrangled and disputed the matter into so much uncertainty, that mankind was very much staggered about it, and the doubts and difficulties that were raised about it did very much break the force, and weaken the influence of so great and weighty a Consideration.

Thus it was among the *Gentiles*. And under the Law of *Moses*, tho' the *Jews* had such apprehensions of their own immortality, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, as natural light suggested to them; yet that Covenant and Dispensation added but very little to the clearing of these notions, and the strengthening of

of this perswasion in the minds of men ; it did rather suppose it, than add any new strength and force to it : for under that Dispensation the eyes of men were generally fixt upon temporal promises and threatnings : tho' as the times of the *Messias* grew nearer, and the sufferings of that People sharper, they began to have clearer apprehensions of a Resurrection to another and better life ; it being natural to men when they are destitute of present comfort, to cherish and make much of the future hopes of a better condition.

And therefore we find that the People of the *Jews*, when they had been long exercised with great afflictions, began to comfort and support themselves with the hopes of a blessed resurrection to a better life ; as is evident from the History of the seven Brethren in the *Maccabees*, who with great patience and courage bore up under the most exquisite torments, in confidence of being raised again to a blessed state in another world. And of these it is that the Apostle certain-

ly

Vol. XI. ly speaks, *Heb. 11. 35.* when he says *that some were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.*

But the Apostle tells us expressly, *2 Tim. 1. 10.* that the clear and certain discovery of a future state is owing to the Christian Religion, and *made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.* Not only Natural Light, but all the Revelations which God had made to the world before, had this weakness and imperfection in them, that they did not give men the clear discovery and full assurance of another life; and consequently had but little efficacy in comparison to engage men to their duty, or to support and comfort them under sufferings: And therefore the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, calls *the Gospel*, in opposition to *the Law*, *the power of an endless Life*, *Heb. 7. 16.* intimating to us, how great a force and influence the clear apprehensions of another life are apt to have

have upon the minds of men. For which reason the same Apostle tells us, *ver. 18, 19.* that the Law was too weak to raise men to the perfection of Virtue and Goodness, because it did not work strongly enough upon the hopes of men, by the greatness and clearness of its promises; and that for this weakness it was removed, and a more powerful and awakening Dispensation brought in the place of it: *For verily, says he, there is an annulling of the Commandment going before, meaning the Law of Moses, which by the Gospel was abrogated and made void, for the weakness and unprofitableness of it; for the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did.* For which reason, *Chap. 8. 6.* he calls the Covenant of the Gospel, *a better Covenant*, because *it was established upon better promises, viz. the promise of an eternal Inheritance*, as the same Apostle speaks, *Chap. 9. 15.* All the express Promises of the Law were only of temporal good things, but the Promises of the Gospel are of eternal life and happiness: *This is the promise*

Vol. XI. *promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life, says St. John, 1 Joh. 2. 25.*

Now the firm perswasion of another life, does not only answer that great difficulty and objection against the Providence of God, from the seeming injustice and inequality of his dealings with good and bad Men in this world, because the eternal rewards and punishments of another world will set all things straight, and make abundant amends to good Men, for all their sufferings and afflictions here; and will render the past prosperity of bad Men one of the greatest aggravations of their misery: As it is said of *Babylon*, *Rev 18. 7. How much she hath glorified her self and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.* In like manner God will deal with wicked men in another world; their torments shall rise in proportion to the pleasure and prosperity they have enjoyed and abused in this world. This remarkable change of condition which shall befall good and bad men in another world, is set forth to us in a very lively

lively and affecting manner in the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*, *Luke* 16. 25. where *Abraham* is represented speaking thus to the rich Man, *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. He is comforted in proportion to his sufferings in this World: and thou art tormented in proportion to the sensual pleasures and luxuries of thy former life. Men under great want and sufferings, are apt to think their lot in this World very hard: and yet upon the whole matter, and taking all things into consideration, who would not much rather chuse to be Lazarus with his hard fortune in this World, and everlasting Consolation in the other; than the rich Man drowned in pleasure in this World, and tormented in flames in the other? I say the firm belief of another life, does not only answer this Objection against the Divine Providence: but does likewise minister abundant comfort and matter of joy to good men,*

under all their fetts and troubles in this World. Nay, this Consideration alone of a blessed immortality in another World, of which only the Christian Religion hath given us full and undoubted assurance, is of that weight and moment, as to contribute more to the support of our Spirits under the Evils and Calamities of this life, than all the Considerations of Philosophy put together. They are many of them pleasant and pretty, and fit enough to entertain and divert a Man's mind under a slight trouble; but they are too speculative and refine for common capacities, too thin and weak to bear any great stress, and to support and relieve a Man's mind under a sore and heavy affliction: but this is a consideration which hath strength and substance in it, that all things will end in our unspeakable happiness, and that this happiness shall have no end. This the Apostle *St. Paul* speaks of as a proper Consideration of comfort, of which we are assured by the Christian Religion, that all the evils of this life, shall in the last issue

sue and result of things co-operate to our Happiness, *Rom. 8.* Sermon. 13.

28. *We know*, says he, *that all things work together for good to them that love God.* And 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18. *For which cause we faint not, &c.* The Apostle gives an account, how they were afflicted and persecuted, and what it was that supported them under all their Sufferings, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11. *We are troubled on every side; yet not distressed: we are perplexed; but not in despair: persecuted; but not forsaken: cast down; but not destroyed. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus sake.* And then he tells us what it was that kept up the Spirits of Christians under these sharp sufferings, viz. the assurance which the Christian Religion gives us of a Resurrection to a better and happier life, ver. 14. *Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus.* And then it follows, ver. 16.

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For which cause we faint not : but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day ; that is, tho' our bodies be wasted and weakened, yet every day we grow stronger in the resolution of our minds, because Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal. And then, at the beginning of the next Chap. he still urgeth the same consideration of comfort, that so soon as we pass out of the Troubles of this life, we shall enter upon the Happiness of the other. For we know, that is, we Christians are assured, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here you see is the great ground of their confidence and comfort in the worst condition, and under the most

most grievous Persecutions which they were continually exposed to.

Serm. 13.

And therefore our Saviour and his Apostles make no scruple to pronounce those persons *blessed*, who in respect of their sufferings seemed to be of all men in the World the most miserable; and they pronounce them *happy*, upon this very account of their sufferings. *Matt. 5. 10, 11, 12. Blessed are they, says our Saviour, which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.* Great sufferings for God in this World, do entitle us, by virtue of this gracious promise of our Lord, to a glorious reward in the other. So likewise St. James exhorts Christians to rejoyce in their Sufferings, *James 1. 2. My brethren, account it all joy when ye fall into diverse tryals.* And Chap. 5. 11. *Behold,* says

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says he, *we count them happy which endure.* And St. Peter, to the same purpose, 1 Pet. 4. 14. *If ye be persecuted for righteousness sake, happy are ye.* So solid a comfort to men under all the Troubles and Afflictions of this World, is that firm assurance which the Christian Religion gives us of a future happiness, as to bring even the greatest Miseries which in this life we are liable to, in some sense, under the notion of *blessedness*.

And this was not only fine talk, like the glorious brags of the *Stoicks*; but the primitive Christians, in infinite Examples, gave the real Proof and Evidence of it, in their constant and chearful behaviour under the most cruel and intolerable Torments. *Non magna loquimur; sed vivimus*, says *Tertul.* in the name of the Christians. *We do not talk great things; but do them; and demonstrate the real effect of our Words and Profession in our lives and actions.* Never did the Arguments fetch'd from another World, and the

the assurance of a blessed Immortality, display their force and virtue more, than in the joyful sufferings of the first Christians, and their generous contempt of all that was dear to them in this World, *in hope of that eternal life, which God that cannot lye had promised;* and which the Son of God had ensured to them, by his Resurrection from the Dead. Serm. 13.

II. The Christian Religion promiseth to every sincere Christian, the inward Assistance and Support and Comfort of God's Holy Spirit, to bear up the weakness of human Nature under its heaviest pressures of fear or sufferings. And this is peculiar to the Christian Religion: for tho' the Providence of God did take particular care of good men in all Ages, and he did always in some good measure assist them to do their duty, and afford comfort and support to them under great tryals and sufferings; yet God never made so exprefs and general a promise of this to all good men, as he hath done by

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the Christian Religion. Never was so constant a presence and influence of the Divine Spirit vouchsafed and assured to men under any dispensation, as that of the Gospel, wherein the Spirit of God is promised to all that sincerely embrace the Christian Religion, to reside and dwell in them, not only to all the purposes of Sanctification and Holiness ; but of support and comfort under all Troubles and Sufferings ; for which reason the Gospel is call'd *the ministration of the spirit*, and is upon this account said to be *more glorious* than any other Revelation which God had ever made to Mankind. And therefore this is said to be essential to every Christian, to have the Spirit of God dwell in him. *Rom. 8. 9, 10.* speaking of all true Christians, *Ye are, saith St. Paul, not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* So that every sincere Christian is *made partaker of the promise of the spirit through faith* ; that is, by his belief

lief of the Christian Religion, he is under the immediate conduct and influence of God's Holy Spirit, and hath this blessed Guide and Comforter always present with him, nay continually dwelling and residing in him, if we do not grieve and quench and drive him away from us by our ill treatment of him, and resistance of his blessed motions.

And this promise of the Spirit, our Saviour had a very particular respect to, when he prescribes Faith in himself as a special remedy against that trouble which possesseth their minds, upon the apprehension of his departure from them; and therefore he tells them so often, that when he was gone from them, he would send them *another Comforter* or *Advocate*, who should undertake their cause, and would stand by them in their greatest troubles and temptations. He tells them, that he himself would be an Advocate for them in Heaven: but because that was at a great distance,

stance, and might not be so sensible a comfort to them, he promiseth to send them *another Advocate*, that should be present with them here on earth, and upon all occasions undertake their patronage and defence. So that all things considered, he assures them there was so little reason to be troubled at his departure from them, that they had chuse rather to be glad of it, because it would turn to their great advantage ; and instead of the benefit of his outward teaching and presence, they should have the inward presence and teaching of his Spirit, and the continual aids and supports of his Grace. *I go my way*, says he, *John 16. 5, 6, 7. I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou ? but because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you : but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And so*

so the Evangelist tells us before, *Chap. 7. 39. that the spirit was not to be given, till Jesus was first glorified. This, says he, spake he of the spirit, which they that believed on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified;* plainly declaring, that according to the wise dispensation of God, it was so ordered, that the sending of the Holy Ghost for the propagating of the Gospel, by those miraculous powers which were to be conferred upon the first Publishers of it, and for the supporting and comforting of Christians under the sharp trials and sufferings to which they were to be exposed, was the fruit of *Christ's Ascension into Heaven, and his sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high, and the first boon which he should obtain of his Father, by the Virtue and Power of his intercession. I will pray the Father, says he, ver. 16. of this Chap. and he shall send you another Advocate, the spirit of truth, and he shall abide with you for ever. He shall send you another*

Serm. 13.

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another Comforter; so our Translation renders the word *παράκλητος* : but it most properly signifies an *Advocate* or *Patron*, that undertakes our defence, and pleads our cause for us. And this the Holy Ghost, in a most eminent and remarkable manner was to the Apostles and first Christians, when they were called to answer for themselves before Kings and Governours. They were generally men of low condition and mean breeding, easily dasht out of countenance before great men; and therefore our Saviour promised that the Holy Ghost should be their *Advocate*, and should prompt and assist them in the pleading of their cause. *Mat. 10. 18, 19. Ye shall be brought before Governours and Kings, for my sake: but when they deliver you up, take no thought, how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak: for it is not you that speak; but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. Or as it is in St. Luke, Chap. 12. ver. 12. The Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour,*

hour, what ye ought to say. And yet more fully, Chap. 21. ver. 12, 14, 15. where speaking again of their being brought before Kings and Rulers for his Names sake, he gives them this charge, Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your Adversaries shall not be able to gainsay, nor resist.

Serm. 13.

And this Promise we find remarkably made good to St. Stephen, *Acts 6. 10.* of whom it is there said, that *his Enemies were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.* And to St. Paul likewise, when he was first called to answer for himself at Rome, as he himself tells Timothy, *2 Tim. 4. 16, 17. At my first answer no man stood with me; but all men forsook me: notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.*

And tho' this was extraordinary, yet all Christians have, by virtue of this Promise, the ordinary assistance

assistance and comfort of God's holy spirit in all their troubles and afflictions. By this Spirit we may in all our distresses with confidence make our addressees to God, *having access by one spirit to the Father*, as St. Paul speaks, *Ephes. 2. 18.* By the same Spirit we are assisted in our Prayers, and directed many times what to ask of God, suitably to the condition which his Providence designs to bring us into; which seems to be the Apostle's meaning, *Rom. 8. 26. Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what to pray for as we ought; but the spirit it self maketh intercession for us;* that is, suggests to us such requests as are fit for us to put up to God. By the same Spirit is secretly infused into our Souls, *Peace and Joy in believing, great Consolation and good Hope through Grace.* Hence are those expressions in Scripture of *the consolation of the spirit*, and of *joy in the Holy Ghost*, the best Cordial in the World in all cases of trouble.

And

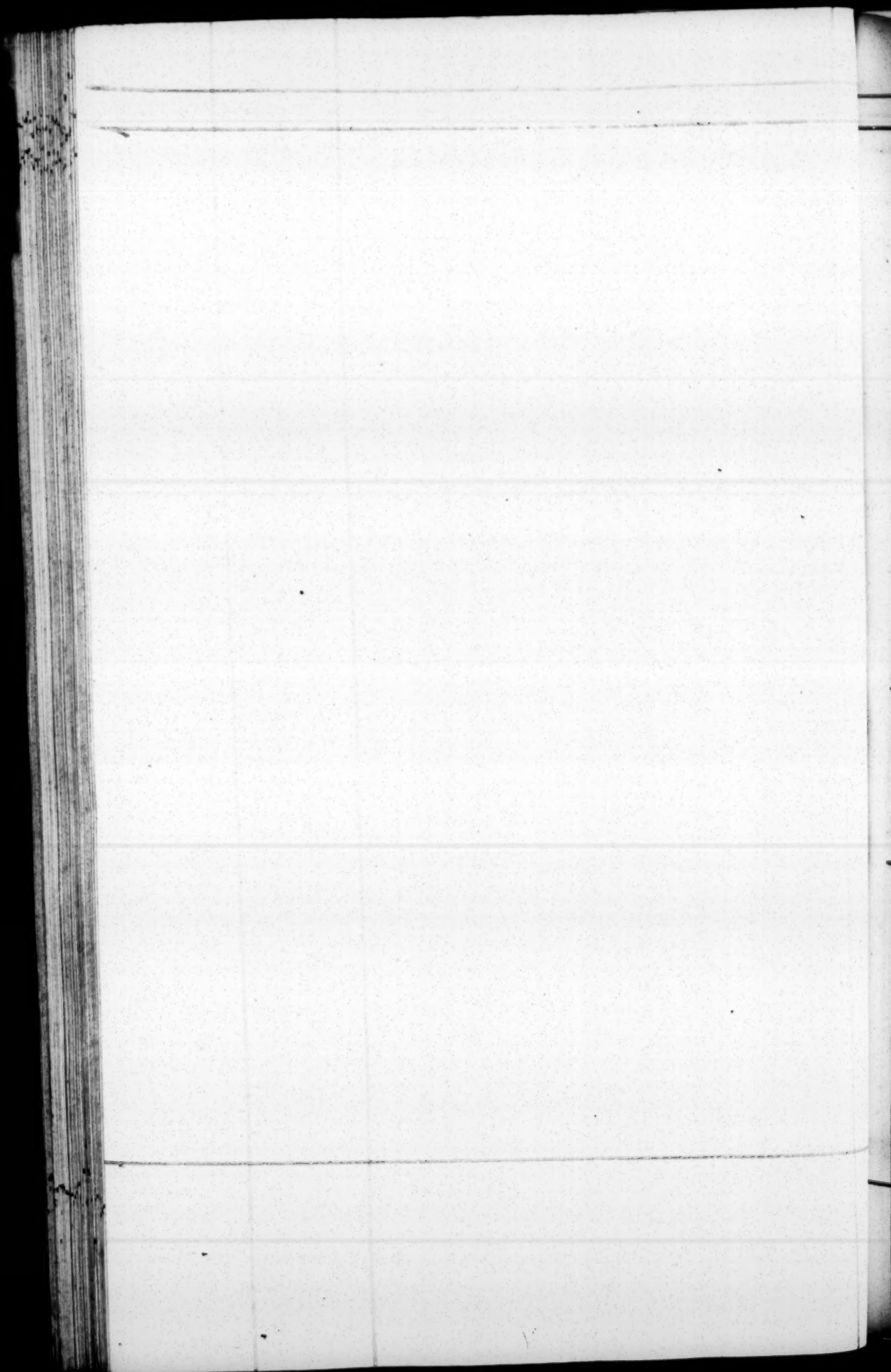
And in extraordinary cases, good men by virtue of this Promise of the Spirit, may expect to be born up and comforted in a very extraordinary and supernatural manner, under the greatest tribulations and sufferings *for righteousness sake*. This was very signal and remarkable in the primitive Christians, who were exposed to the most fierce and cruel persecutions; and may still be expected in like cases of extraordinary suffering for the testimony of God's Truth. *If ye be reproached, saith St. Peter, 1 Pet. 4. 14. for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.* The Spirit of God is there promised, to strengthen and support all that suffer for the Name of Christ, in a very conspicuous and glorious manner; according to that prayer of St. Paul, Col. 1. 11. that Christians might be *strengthened with all might, according to God's glorious power, unto all long-suffering with joyfulness*. For when God exerciseth good men with tryals more than human, and sufferings

ings which are beyond the ordinary rate of human strength and patience to bear, he hath engaged himself to assist and endow them with more than human courage and resolution. So *St. Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, who had not yet felt the utmost rage of Persecution, *1 Cor. 10. 13. No temptation, or trial, hath yet befallen you, but what is common to men; nothing but what is frequently incident to human Nature, and what by an ordinary assistance of God's Grace, men may grapple with; but in case God calls men to extraordinary Sufferings, He is faithful that hath promised, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able; but will with the temptation also; make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* And why should we be daunted at the weight of an affliction, if we be assured that our strength shall be increased in proportion to our burden.

And wherever this promise is not made good, there is some defect on
our

our part ; either men are not sincere in the profession of the Truth, and then no wonder if they fall for fear of suffering ; or they have been too confident of themselves, and have not with that earnestness and importunity they ought, pray'd to God for his Grace and Assistance, and thereupon God hath justly left them to try their strength against a violent and powerful temptation : as he did *Peter*, who for all his confidence, did upon no very great temptation deny his Saviour ; but even in this case, where there is Truth and Sincerity at the bottom, God gives to such Persons, as he did to *Peter*, the opportunity of recovering themselves by Repentance.

There are *three* particulars more remain, but I shall proceed no farther at this time.



SERMON XIV.

The true Remedy against the
Troubles of life.

The third Sermon on this Text.

JOHN XIV. 1.

*Let not your heart be troubled : ye
believe in God ; believe also in me.*

FROM these words I proposed
to shew, what Force and Vir-
tue there is in the Remedy propo-
sed by our Saviour, to mitigate and
allay our Troubles ; and I told you
that our Saviour here prescribes a
double Remedy.

C c 2

First,


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First, Faith in God, the great Creator and Governour of the World.

Second, Faith in himself, the Son of God and Saviour of men. I have spoken to the *first*, and have likewise entred upon the

Second, And here I propounded to shew, what farther Considerations of Comfort and Support Faith in Christ, and the firm Belief of the Christian Religion do afford to good men, for the mitigating and allaying of their greatest Fears and Troubles. And I mentioned *five*.

I. Faith in Christ gives us full assurance of Immortality, and the Rewards of another World.

II. It promiseth to every sincere Christian, the inward assistance and support of God's holy Spirit. Thus far I have gone. I now proceed,

III. It

III. It assures us of the special Efficacy of our Prayers with God, either for our deliverance from Trouble, or for the aids and supports of his grace under it.

Now concerning the great Efficacy of our Prayers with God, there are several very particular and remarkable Promises and Declarations in the new Testament. *Matt. 7. 7. Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Matt. 21. 22. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. John 15. 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* But then he directs us to put up our Petitions to God in his name, as the way to make them prevalent, *John 14. 13, 14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

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it. And Chap. 16. 23, 24. he repeats this Promise again for their support and comfort under the tribulations which they should endure. *And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full* And again, ver. 26, 27. *At that day ye shall ask in my Name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you.* He assures them of God's merciful inclination towards them; and if it would add any thing to their comfortable assurance of having their Prayers heard, he could have told them, *that he would pray the Father for them.* St. James particularly comforts the Christians under their tryals upon this Consideration, that God is ready to give Wisdom and Strength to demean our selves as we ought under sufferings, if we heartily beg it of him, *Jam. 1. 2, 3, 4.*

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My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience : but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. And since this requires great Wisdom, to bear great afflictions with patience, therefore he adds, that God is always ready to grant this Wisdom and Grace to those that heartily beg it of him. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him. 1 John 3. 22. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And Chap. 5. 14, 15. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that is, we Christians : for he had said before, These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; and then it follows, And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask in any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know

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that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him; that is, tho' we have not presently the thing we pray'd for, yet we are as sure of it as if we had it. The earnest prayer of every sincere Christian, is very powerful and available with God. So St. James assures us, Chap. 5. 16. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much: Much more the united Prayers of the faithful. So our Saviour declares, Matt. 18. 19. Again, I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

All these Promises and Declarations do certainly signifie a more especial Efficacy and Prevalency of the Prayers of Christians. And tho' there was a miraculous Power of Prayer in the primitive times, which is now ceased, and of which St. James plainly speaks, Chap. 5. 14, 15. *Is any sick among you? let him*

ensur'd, by Faith in Christ.

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Serm. 14.

him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord : And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. Yet it is certain that these Promises extended farther, to the Efficacy of the Prayers of the faithful in such cases. And so our Saviour extends this promise, *Matt. 21. 22.* for after he had said in the Verse before, *Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.* After this he immediately subjoins, *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.* Hereby declaring that the Efficacy of the Prayers of Christians was not limited only to those miraculous Effects, which were but to continue for a time, but that this Promise was to be extended to the Prayers of the faithful in all cases and all times.

And

And indeed all the grounds and reasons of the Efficacy and Prevalency of our Prayers, which are mentioned in the new Testament, do equally concern Christians in all times ; as that we pray to God in the name and mediation of *Jesus Christ*, upon which our Saviour very frequently when he makes this Promise, lays great stress, and seems to render it as the reason of the special Efficacy of our Prayers. *John 14. 13, 14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. And Chap. 16. 23, 24. Verily verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall receive.*

Another reason of the acceptance and prevalency of our Prayers, is, that the Spirit of God which dwells in all true Christians does help our weakness,

weakness, and secretly directs us to ask of God those things which are according to his will, and does as it were intercede for us. *Rom. 8. 26. Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit it self maketh intercession for us. And ver. 27. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God. And no wonder if those Petitions are very prevalent, which we are assisted and directed to put up to God, according to his will.*

And this certainly is a great comfort under any trouble, that we can have free access to God by prayer, in confidence that he will grant us those requests which we put up to him according to his will. And this the Apostle to the *Hebrews* mentions more than once, as an argument to them to continue stedfast in the profession of their Religion, notwithstanding

standing the Persecution that attended it, because we may at all times address our selves to God in confidence of his gracious help and assistance. *Heb. 4. 16.* After he had exhorted them *to hold fast their profession*, as an encouragement thereto, he adds the free access we may have to God for his help and support : *Let us therefore, says he, come boldly, or with great freedom and confidence, to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find favour with him for our seasonable help and succour.* And to the same purpose, *Chap. 10. 19, 20.* Having therefore, brethren, freedom to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, that is, having access to God in prayer by Jesus Christ ; *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of Faith, that is, in perfect confidence that our prayers will be graciously heard and answered ;* upon which he adds, *Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised :* If we continue stedfast to God,
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and the profession of his Truth, *Serm. 14.*
he will make good all that he
hath promised, both of present
support under our sufferings, and
of the glorious reward of them in
another life : He will hear our
prayers, and grant us the aids and
supplies of his Grace as we stand
in need of them.

IV. The Christian Religion pro-
pounds to us, the best and
most admirable Pattern that
ever was of patience and con-
stancy of Mind under the appre-
hension of approaching Evils, or
the sense of present sufferings, and
of a contented and chearful sub-
mission to the will of God in the
saddest condition to which hu-
mane Nature is incident : and that
is the Pattern of our blessed Savi-
our, who for this reason among
others, was so great a sufferer in
so many kinds, that he might go
before us in this rough and diffi-
cult way, and *leave us an Exam-
ple that we should follow his steps,*
that we might learn from him
how

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how to calm and quiet our spirits, to appease and hush the tumults of our Passions, under the severest dispensation of God's Providence towards us, and to bend our wills to a patient submission to the will of our heavenly Father, under the sorest afflictions and sharpest sufferings. For tho' our blessed Saviour prayed so earnestly to his Father, that *that bitter Cup might pass from him*, yet how quietly and chearfully did he resign and yield up himself to the will of God, saying, *Yet not my will: but thine be done!* Humane Nature shrunk and gave back at the sight of his dreadful sufferings: but his Reason over-ruled the Inclinations of Nature, and kept him to a steady resolution of submitting to the will of God. And therefore when *Peter* attempted his rescue, he commanded him to desist, saying, *Put up thy sword into the sheath? The Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* *John 18. 11.* And tho' he had as quick a sense of suffering as any man, yet
with

with what patience did he possess his soul ! with what meekness and humility of spirit did he bear and yield to it ! He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a Sheep before the Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. When he was reviled, he reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatned not : but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. And thus it became the Captain of our Salvation, that he might be a perfect Pattern to us of patience and submission to the will of God, of a meek and undisturbed mind, under the greatest bodily pains, and the extream anguish of his Soul, to be made perfect by sufferings.

So that under the greatest present evils, or the most fearful apprehension of future evil and suffering, we should fix our eye steadfastly upon this great and glorious Example of Patience and Constancy and Meekness, of a due sense, and yet of a most decent behaviour under the heaviest load
of

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of affliction, that was ever laid upon any of the Sons of Men; *Looking*, as the Apostle exhorts, *Heb. 12. 2, 3. Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the shame; and considering him, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds.*

And surely if we would but let our minds dwell a while upon this Consideration of the Sufferings of the Son of God, and his great meekness and patience, and submission to the will of God under them, it would mightily conduce to the mitigating of our trouble, and bringing us *to possess our souls in patience*, in the saddest condition that can befall us.

And what Consideration more proper for us than this, when we are going to receive the blessed Sacrament, wherein the Sufferings of the Son of God are represent-
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ed to us, in the symbols of his Body broken, and his Blood shed for the remission of our sins? And there are many Considerations which this sight is apt to suggest to us, which are so many powerful arguments to quiet and comfort our minds under the greatest Troubles and Sufferings which we are liable to; such as these.

i. The grievous Sufferings which the Son of God was exposed to, do clearly shew us that the good things of this life are not so valuable, nor the evils and sufferings of it so considerable as we are apt to fancy and imagine; when the best man that ever lived, was so destitute even of the common comforts and conveniences of humane life, and had so large a share of the calamities and sufferings of it. If we could but rectify our opinion of things, it would go a great way in making any of the evils and afflictions of this life tolerable. If God see good to reduce us to poverty and want, let

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us think of him, who *being Lord of all, had not where to lay his head*; who *being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich*. To be destitute of worldly Accommodations cannot seem so dismal and despicable a sight, when we consider whose lot it was to live in a low and indigent condition; the very consideration whereof doth not only make poverty tolerable, but even glorious.

So likewise when we are *persecuted for Righteousness sake*, and exercised with Sufferings and Reproaches; when we are ready to be discouraged in well-doing by the opposition we meet withal from the ingratitude of men, and the malicious interpretation of our good actions, perverting the best things, done with the best mind and to the best end, to some ill purpose and design; let us *look to Jesus, and consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself*, and this will help to abate the

the hideous apprehension of these things.

Serm. 13.

2. The Sufferings of the Son of God are a demonstration to us, that the love and favour of God, wherein the chief Happiness of Man consists, are not to be estimated and measur'd by outward prosperity in this World; much less can it be concluded from temporal afflictions and sufferings, that God hath no favour and kindness for those whom he thinks fit to exercise with them. For we see plainly by this instance of the grievous Sufferings of his Son, that God may most deeply wound and afflict those whom he most dearly loves: and if we can be secure of the favour of God, and his loving kindness, why should *our hearts be troubled* and dismayed at the apprehension of any evil that can befall us?

God may love his Children, and yet chasten them very severely: nay that he does so, is rather an

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Argument that they are his Children, and that he loves them, and is concerned for them. So I am sure the Apostle teacheth us to argue, *Heb. 12. 6, 7, 8. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.* The heaviest and most grievous load of Sufferings that ever was laid on any Man, God permitted to be laid on his only begotten Son, the dearly beloved of his Soul, in whom he was well-pleased. The greater our afflictions are, and the more we suffer for *Righteousness sake*, so much the liker are we to the Son of God, and so much the more likely to be the Sons and Children of God. 'Tis true, as the Apostle tells us, that *no affliction for the present is joyous, but grievous*: but surely it is a great mitigation of it,

it, to consider what a glorious
Example and Argument of Pati-
ence our Religion proposeth to us,
for our encouragement under suf-
ferings; That the best Man that
ever was, lived in the most af-
flicted condition; and the greatest
sufferer that ever was, or can be,
was *the dearly beloved Son of*
God.

Serm. 14.

3. In the victorious Sufferings of
the Son of God, we see the World
conquered to our hand, all the terrors
and temptations of it disarmed, and
all its force baffled and broken.
This consideration our Saviour
makes use of to support the faint
Spirits of his Disciples, under the
melancholy apprehensions which
they had of sufferings, *John 16.*
33. In the world ye shall have tri-
bulation: but be of good cheer; I
have overcome the world. The great
work is done to our hands; af-
fliction and death are vanquish'd
and overcome by him. That con-
quest which *the Captain of our Salva-*
tion hath already made of all

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the Powers of Darknes, renders our victory over them cheap and easie.

4. The temptations and sufferings of our Lord were greater than ours are or can be : for he bore the heavy and insupportable load of all the sins of all Mankind, and of the wrath and vengeance due to them. *The Lord hath laid on him,* saith the Prophet, *Isa. 53. 6, 7. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all ; he was oppressed and afflicted.* And well might he be oppressed with affliction, who had such an intolerable burthen as the sins of all Mankind to press him down. That passage is commonly apply'd to him, and well might he cry out in that manner, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.* Such were the Sufferings of our Lord, so great and so grievous, as none of us are in any degree able

ble to undergo. That weight  under which he crouched, would Serm. 13. crush us ; that which he was hardly able to sustain, would certainly sink us : and do we complain and *faint in our minds*, when but a very little part of the punishment due to us only for our own sin is inflicted upon us ? The Consideration of the heavy and *unknown sufferings of the Son of God*, should make all our afflictions not only tolerable, but light.

5. And yet we have in effect the same Support that he had. We are apt to be very much disheartned and discouraged at the apprehension of sufferings, from the Consideration of our own weakness and frailty : *but the spirit of Christ dwells in us*, and the same glorious Power that raised up Jesus from the dead, works mightily in them that believe. St. Paul useth very high expressions in this matter, *Ephes. 1. 19, 20. That ye may know*, says he, speaking in general of all Christians, *what is the*

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exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right hand. So that every sincere Christian is endowed with a kind of omnipotency, being able, as St. Paul says of himself, to do all things through Christ strengthening him. We are of our selves very weak, and the temptations and terrours of the world are very powerful: but there is a Principle residing in every true Christian, that is able to bear us up against the World and the power of all its Temptations. Whatsoever is born of God, says St. John, overcometh the World: for greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World. The Holy Spirit of God which dwells in all true Christians, is a more powerful Principle of Resolution and Courage and Patience, under the sharpest Trials and Sufferings, than that evil Spirit which rules in the Word is to stir up and set on the malice
and

and rage of the World against us. *Ye are of God, and have overcome the World ; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World.*

Serm. 14.

6. Let us consider farther, for whom and for what our blessed Lord suffered. Not for himself ; but for our sake : not for any fault of his own ; for *he had no sin* ; but for our sins. He was perfectly innocent : but we are great and grievous offenders. We suffer upon our own account : but he only for our sakes, and for our salvation. So that the Example of our Lord's Sufferings hath an irresistible force and virtue in it, to argue us into patience and submission. Did he bear the load of our sins so willingly ? did he *who had no sin* suffer so patiently, to free us from eternal sufferings ? And shall we who are guilty think much to bear a small part of that burden which he so cheerfully underwent for us, and which falls so much short of the due

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due punishment of our faults? The penitent Thief upon the Cross urged the equity and force of this argument to patience to his fellow Criminal, that they who had been guilty of such great Crimes, and were justly condemned for them, ought to be patient under their Sufferings. *We indeed, says he, are justly condemned ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds : but this man hath done nothing amiss.*

7. And *lastly*, If we consider the transcendent Excellency and Dignity of the Person, who underwent so great sufferings with so much meekness and patience, and with so even and undisturbed a mind, this will calm and allay our passions, and mitigate the troubles which befall us pitiful and inconsiderable Creatures, in comparison of this *Prince of Glory, and Heir of everlasting Bliss.* When we consider the meekness of this excellent Person, *The eternal Son of God*, and with what submission

submission and serenity of mind he demeaned himself under so great and continual provocations from his own creatures and beneficiaries, those whom he had made, and whom he came to save ; shall we think much to bear the indignities and affronts of our fellow-Creatures ? When we behold how contented this great Person was in the meanest condition, how he welcomed all events, and was so perfectly resigned to the Will of his heavenly Father, that whatever pleased God, pleased him ; shall we murmur at any condition which the Providence of God allots to us, and repine at any event whatsoever ?

Shall we resent injuries and affronts and calumnies so heinously as to be out of all temper and patience, when we consider with what meekness of temper, and how little emotion of mind the Son of God bore all these ? how *he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off*

Serm. 13.

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off the hair, and with-held not his face from shame and spitting ; how he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth ; being reviled he reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatned not.

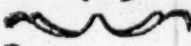
To conclude, Can we entertain thoughts of revenge towards the instruments of our sufferings, when we have such a Pattern of forgiving before us, who poured out his blood for the expiation of the guilt of them that shed it, and spent his last breath in a most fervent and charitable Prayer for his betrayers and murderers ?

Thus we should propose to our selves the Pattern of our Lord's Spirit and Demeanour under Sufferings, in whom Meekness and Submission and Patience had their perfect work ; that the same mind may be in us, that was in Christ Jesus, and that as we have him for

a support under Trouble.

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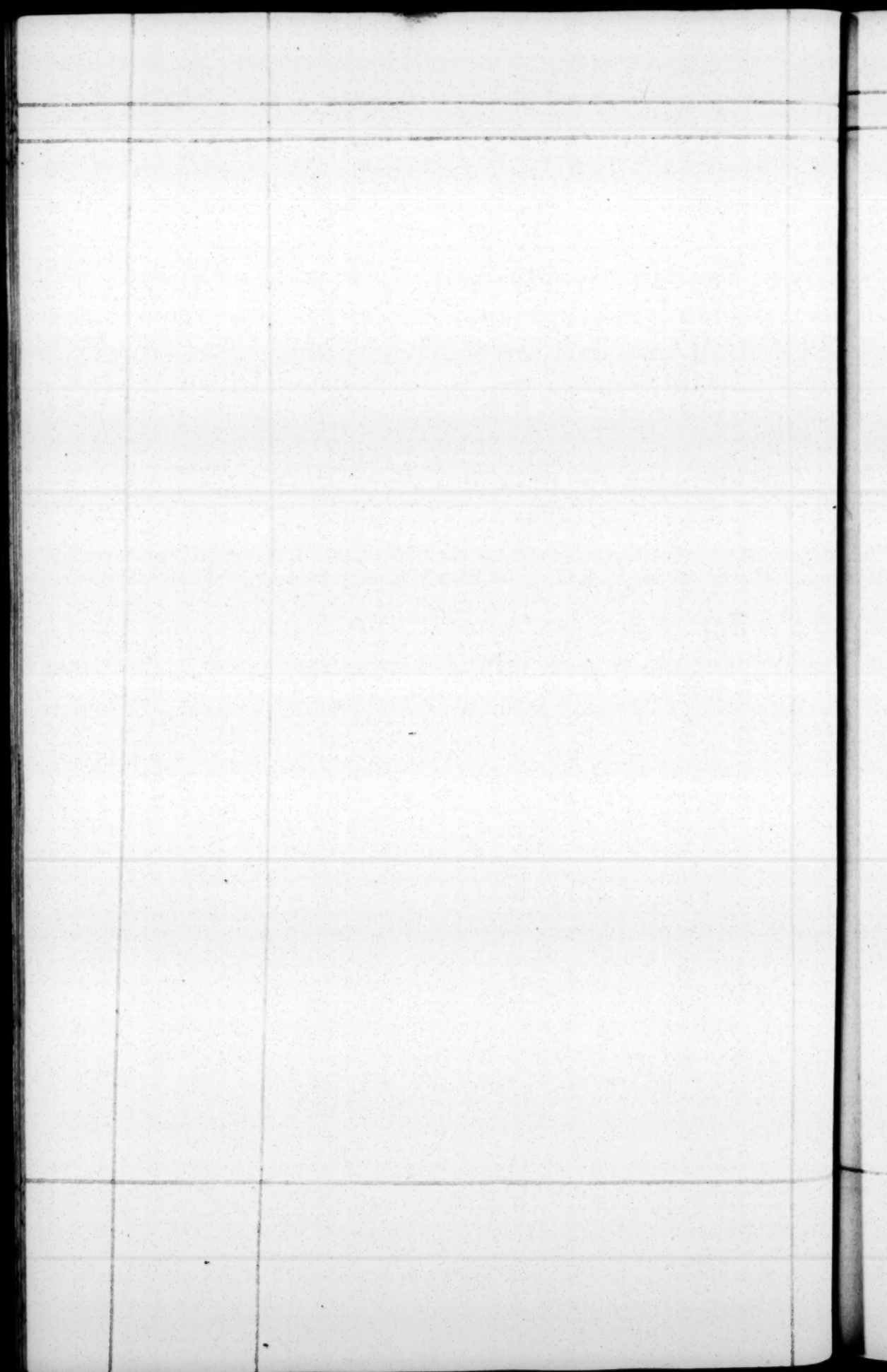
for an Example, we may follow his steps.


Serm. 14.

The last Consideration of Comfort and Support under Trouble, which the Christian Religion gives us, remains yet to be spoken to, namely, That we are assured of a most compassionate and prevalent and perpetual Patron and Advocate and Intercessor with God for us.

But this together with the Application of this whole Discourse, I shall refer to the next opportunity.

S E R-



SERMON XV.

The true Remedy against the
Troubles of life.

The fourth Sermon on this Text.

JOHN XIV. 1.

*Let not your heart be troubled : ye
believe in God ; believe also in me.*

I Come now to the *Vib.* and *last*
ground of Comfort, which the
Christian Religion affords to good
men, for their support under Trou-
ble, namely, That it assures us of a
most compassionate and prevalent
and

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and perpetual Patron and Advocate and Intercessor with God in Heaven for us, namely, our Blessed Saviour, *who for the suffering of death was crowned with glory and honour, advanced at the right hand of God, where he sits in great majesty and glory, having all power in heaven and earth committed to him, and where he lives continually to make intercession for us.*

And this is another Consideration mentioned by our Saviour for the comfort of his Disciples, who were so sorrowful at the thoughts of his departure from them, That tho' he should leave the World, yet he should be highly advanced in heaven, where he would certainly employ all his favour and power and interest for their Benefit and Advantage, and be an everlasting Patron and Advocate for those whose Salvation he had purchased with so much sweat and blood, presenting our Requests and Prayers to God, in virtue of his most meritorious Sacrifice and Sufferings

ferings continually presented to his Father, perpetually soliciting our cause, and procuring for us all those Blessings by his intercession in Heaven, which he had purchased for us by his blood upon earth. *For which reason, saith the Apostle, Heb. 7. 25. he is able to save to the utmost all those that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us ; that is, He is able to perfect the work of our Salvation, which he began here upon earth ; and to procure for all those who address their Prayers to God in his name, whatever is needful and convenient for us, because he is always at the right hand of God, to second our Prayers by his powerful intercession for us.*

And this is a ground of Comfort, tho' not greater and more substantial in it self than the other ; yet more accommodated to our apprehensions, who are

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Serm. 15.

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naturally apt to dread the Majesty of God, and to seek out for some in favour with him, to be Mediators and Intercessors with God for us, and to present our Prayers and Requests to him. And this was the Original of the Addresses of the Heathens to the Angels and Souls departed, as a kind of intermediate and inferiour Deities, to present their Prayers, and intercede with the great God in their behalf. And as in compliance with the general apprehension of Mankind concerning the appeasing of the Deity by all sorts of Sacrifices, God was pleased to provide *one sacrifice*, which by being *once offered* should *obtain eternal redemption for us, and perfect for ever them that are sanctified*, and by this means to put an end both to the carnal Sacrifices of the Law, and the barbarous and inhuman Sacrifices of the Pagan Worship: So in like condescension

to

to the general inclinations of Mankind to address themselves to God by several Mediators and Intercessors, God hath appointed *one only Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all*; thereby to put an end to that infinite Superstition which had obtained in the World for so many Ages, of addressing their Prayers to God by the Mediation of good Angels, and the departed Souls of their Heroes and great men, who were, as I may so call them, the Pagan Saints.

So that as under the Gospel God hath appointed but *one sacrifice for sin*, that should be of eternal efficacy; so but *one Mediator* in Heaven for sinners, to offer up our Prayers to God, and to intercede continually for us, in the Power and Virtue of that *one Sacri-*

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fice once offer'd for the redemption of mankind. And therefore it is every whit as contrary to the genius and design of the Christian Religion, to apply our selves to other Intercessors with God in Heaven for us, whether Saints, or Angels, or even the blessed Virgin her self, as it would be to continue still the *Jewish Sacrifices*, not to say the *Heathen*. For it is not clearer that there is but *one proper Sacrifice* under the Gospel, *viz.* that of *Christ upon the Cross*, than that there is but *one mediator and intercessor with God in heaven for us*. Nay St. Paul speaks as if the Christian Religion did no more admit of more *Mediators* than one, than of more *Gods* than one, 1 Tim. 2. 5. *There is one God ; and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.* Nor is the force of this plain Text
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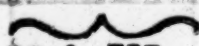
so but one Mediator.

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to be avoided, by saying that the Apostle here speaks of a *Mediator of redemption*, as appears by the following words, *who gave himself a ransom for all*. For it is plain likewise, that he speaks also of a *Mediator of intercession*, and affirms him to be *but one*, as is evident from what goes before. The Apostle directs *prayers and supplications to be made for all men*, and then at the 5. ver. to whom Christians should address these Prayers, and by whose Mediation, *viz. to God, in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ*. For, says he, *there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus*. So that the Apostle's Discourse does as plainly infer, that there is but *one Mediator of Intercession*, as that there is but *one Mediator of Redemption*.

Serm. 15.

And


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And indeed whosoever considers that quite throughout the new Testament our Saviour and his Apostles do constantly direct Christians to make their Prayers to God in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ, and no where give so much as the least intimation of applying our selves to any other Intercessors with God in Heaven for us, may justly wonder how this superstition of praying to Angels and Saints departed, which hath no manner of countenance, and is by necessary consequence so clearly forbidden, should ever prevail among Christians; especially since it is a plain diminution of the Virtue and Efficacy of our Saviour's intercession; or if it add nothing to it, is perfectly vain and endless and to no purpose. For what need of any other Intercessors with God in Heaven for us, if that
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be true which the Apostle to the Hebrews most expressly affirms, that Christ is able to save them to the utmost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Serm. 15.

The prevalency and efficacy whereof may justly minister to us in all our distresses and troubles, some peculiar ground of Comfort above what springs from the bare contemplation of the Divine Nature ; that we have so powerful a Friend to intercede with God for us , one so dearly beloved of him, and so highly in his favour ; one that is advanced far above all principalities and powers , and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come ; and consequently able to do more for us, than all the blessed Saints and Angels in Heaven, and more than all the Powers

Powers of darkness can do against us.

And this is matter of great Comfort to us, upon these *three* Considerations.

1. That our Advocate is nearly related to us, having condescended, by assuming our Nature, to be allied to us, to become *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*, so that we may address our selves to him with great freedom and confidence, and, as the Apostle expresseth it, *Heb. 4. 16. We may come with boldness to this Throne of Grace, for seasonable mercy and help in time of need.* For we may most assuredly believe, that he who stooped to be made Man, and to become one of us, will upon all occasions most heartily be concerned for us, and ready to help us.

2. Considering that he hath already

already given the greatest demonstration of his kindness and compassion to us. We may be sure that he who hath done and suffered such things for our sakes, hath a very tender love and affection for us; he who was contented to die for us, will do for us any thing else that may do us good.

Serm. 15.

3. And that we might have no doubt of his forwardness and inclination to pity and relieve us, he suffered the most grievous things himself that any man could suffer, that from the Experience and Remembrance of our own sufferings, he might learn to compassionate us. ynd this the Apostle particularly insists upon, as a very comfortable consideration to us in all our trials and sufferings, *Heb.* 4. 15, 16. *For we have not an high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempt-*

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ed like as we are ; yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. And Chap. 2. 17, 18. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Priest : for in that he himself suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. So that we may rest assured of his pity and support in all our afflictions and trials, who knows both the infirmity of our Nature, and hath himself had experience of greater sufferings than any of us either shall or can ever be exercised withal.

And as for the general concernment of his Truth and Religion and Church upon Earth, that which all good Men are with so much reason solicitous about, this is his proper care, and the great business that he

is intent upon, now that he is in Heaven, to protect and defend his Truth and Religion, and the Church which professeth it, so that *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*. This is *his Kingdom*, for the effectual administration whereof *all power in Heaven and Earth is committed to him*. And as he intercedeth with his Father for every particular Christian, so much more for *his Church which is in his Body*; to preserve her from all dangers that threaten her ruin, and to guard her against the power and malice of all her Enemies. For to this end was he advanced at the right hand of God, that he might continue there, *till he had made his enemies his foot-stool*. And this Kingdom of his shall continue in his hands, *till he have put down all rule, and all authority and power that sets its self against him: for he must reign, till he have put all things under his feet*.

Serm. 15.


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So that tho' Truth may be obscur'd and clouded for a time, and the Professors of it grievously harra's'd and oppress'd, yet it shall not finally be born down, but shall at length prevail against all opposition; because he who hath undertaken the protection of it is mighty, the *King of kings, and Lord of lords*, the chief Favourite of Heaven, who is continually *at the right hand of God*, and *lives for ever to make intercession for us*.

And thus I have, as briefly as I well could, represented to you, what force and virtue there is in the *two* Remedies here prescribed by our Saviour, for the mitigating and allaying of our troubles, *viz.* Faith in God, the great Creator and Governour of the World; and Faith likewise in himself, the Son of God and Saviour of Men. *Let not your heart be troubled;*

a support in the greatest Trouble.

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*bled : ye believe in God ; believe
also in me.*

Serm. 15.

And now to apply this Discourse to our selves ; the Inferences I shall make from it shall be these *three*.

I. That in all our Troubles and Adversities, of what kind soever, we should support and comfort our selves with the firm belief of the Providence of Almighty God, and of his tender and compassionate care of Mankind, especially of *those that fear him, and put their trust in his mercy.*

II. We should put a high value upon the Christian Religion, and *hold fast the profession of it without wavering*, which affords us such firm and solid grounds of Comfort and Support under all Troubles and Afflictions, as are no where else to be found ; such as nei-
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ther the Light of Nature, nor any other Revelation that God ever made of himself to Mankind, do give us the notice and knowledge of.

III. Since the Prayers of Christ are so effectual and prevalent with God, let us by frequent and fervent prayers make our requests known to God; and let us *with confidence and full assurance of Faith, address our selves to the Throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find favour with him for our seasonable help and support in the time of need.* I shall speak briefly to these, and so conclude this Discourse.

I. In all Troubles and Adversities of what kind soever, under all Afflictions and Sufferings that may befall us, of loss or pain, of poverty and sickness, of reproach and persecution for righteousness sake, and under the

the most fearful apprehensions of danger and distress, to all human appearance inevitably threatening us, in our persons and private concerns, or with relation to the publick peace and tranquillity, or to that which ought to be infinitely dearer to us than all these, our Religion, which is the great concernment of our Souls, and of all Eternity, when we have no hope any where else, no visible means of help and redress, when we are almost in despair of avoiding the danger, and warding off the blow that is made at us, when ruin and destruction seem just to have overtaken us, and are ready to devour us with open mouth, and *to swallow us up quick*; in a word, when we are reduced to the greatest extremity and distress that can be imagined, even in this case, if ever it should happen, we should support our minds with

Serm. 15.

with a firm belief of the Providence of Almighty God, and of his tender and compassionate care of Mankind, especially of *those that fear him, and put their trust in his mercy*; and comfort our selves, as the holy and divine Psalmist does in all our fears and troubles, *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee, Psal. 56. 3.* And he tells us that every good Man hath ground and reason for this confidence, *Psal. 112. 7, 8.* speaking of the Righteous and Good Man, *He shall not, says he, be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid.* And *Psal. 27. 1* *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psal. 62. 5, 6, 7, 8.* *My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from him. He*
only

a support in the greatest Troubles.

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only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence, I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us. And Psal. 46. 1, 2, 7. God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed; and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. To which I will add that comfortable promise, Isa. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.

Serm. 15.

Thus we may, in all conditions that may befall us, in our greatest fears and troubles, ease our hearts, by reposing our selves upon God, in con-

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fidence of his support and deliverance of his Care and Providence, to prevent and divert the evils we fear ; or of his gracious help to bear us up under them ; and of his Mercy and Goodness to deliver us out of them, when he sees it best ; provided always that we be careful of our duty to him, and do what becomes us, and nothing else.

For our more particular direction herein.

I. Let us depend upon God, and entirely confide in his Goodness and Care, and trust his Wisdom and Power for our Protection and Deliverance : for here is our great security. In all our difficulties and troubles, the Providence of God is infinitely more to us, than any Prudence and Conduct of our own. He hath a thousand ways to divert and put

put by the evils which are levelled against us, *to turn the counsels of men backward, and make their devices of none effect.* When we can do nothing to help and save our selves, *his right hand, and his arm, and the light of his countenance can do it, if he have a favour for us.*

Serm. 15.

2. Let us so trust God, as to neglect no prudent and lawful means for our security and preservation from evil. Let us not, by our rashness and folly, provoke trouble and danger, and bring them upon our selves. Let us, according to our Saviour's Counsel, *be wise as Serpents, and innocent as Doves.* Let us use all that Care and Prudence which is consistent with Innocence and a good Conscience; and when we have done that, let us be no farther solicitous, but resign up our selves, and all our con-

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cernments to the good pleasure of God, and the disposal of his wise Providence; and leave it to him, who made the World, to govern it, because he certainly understands it best.

3. Let us be sure to keep within the bounds of our duty, trying no unlawful ways for our ease and preservation and rescue from the evils which we fear and lie under; by loosening the bonds of subjection and obedience to Authority, or by any other sinister and indirect means. For let us assure our selves, that God is never more concerned to appear for us, than when out of Conscience of our Duty to him, we are contented rather to suffer, than work our deliverance by undue means. *Ler us commit our selves to him in well-doing,* and do nothing, no not for the cause of Religion,

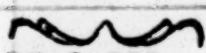
as a solid ground of Comfort.

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ligion, which is contrary to the plain Rules and Precepts of it. *Serm. 15.*

II. We should put a high value upon the Christian Religion, and *hold fast the profession of it without wavering*, which affords to us such firm and solid grounds of Comfort and Support under all Troubles and Afflictions, as are no where else to be found; such as neither the Light of Nature, nor any other Revelation that God ever made of himself to Mankind, do give us notice and knowledge of.

We should highly value the Christian Religion, which hath *brought Life and Immortality to light*, and hath made so clear a discovery to us of the glorious and eternal rewards of another World, for the encouragement of our Faith, and support of our Patience, under the evils and pressures of this life; and which promiseth, and is ready to


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to afford to every sincere Christian, the precious Aids and Comforts of God's holy Spirit, to sustain the weakness of humane Nature under the greatest Tribulations and Sufferings ; and does likewise assure us of the special Efficacy of our Prayers with God ; and sets before us the best and most admirable Pattern that ever was, of a contented and chearful submission to the will of God in the saddest Condition incident to humane Nature, and of perfect patience and composure of mind under the apprehension of approaching Evils, and the sense of present Sufferings ; and lastly, which assures us of a most compassionate and prevalent and perpetual Patron and Advocate and Intercessor with God in Heaven for us. All these are peculiar advantages of the Christian Religion, and ought to be so many endearments of it to us, and engagements *to hold fast*
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the Profession of it. This builds our Comfort and Hope upon a *Rock*, which will abide firm against all *Rains and Winds and Storms*. And if we suffer ourselves to be removed from it, we quit the only Foundation of all our Comfort in this life, and Happiness in the next. So that if we would *hold fast the confidence, and the rejoycing of hope, firm unto the end*, we must take heed, as the Apostle to the *Heb. Chap. 3. 12.* cautions the Christians in his time, *we must, I say, take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil spirit of infidelity, to apostatise from the living God*, that is, to fall off from the profession of his Truth and Religion. A Religion worthy of all men to be received and adhered to ; because as it calls us to sufferings , so it affords the greatest Comforts and Supports under them, as is evident from the chearful and joyful behaviour of the primitive Christians

Serm. 15.

stians and Martyrs, under the greatest extremities of Sufferings and Torments, the like instances whereto of Patience and Constancy, under long and repeated Persecutions, no other Religion that ever was in the World is able to produce.

III. And *lastly*, since the Prayers of Christians are so effectual and prevalent with God, let us, by frequent and fervent Prayer, *in every thing make our requests known to God*; and let us *with Confidence and full Assurance of Faith address our selves to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find favour with him for our seasonable help and support in the time of need*. Let us, as our Saviour exhorts his Disciples, *watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation*. And, as the Apostle likewise exhorts, let us *be sober, and vigilant, and watch unto prayer, taking all opportunities for it*,

it, and spending much time in this duty, than which none of all the duties enjoined by the Christian Religion will turn to a better and more comfortable account, if our hearts and lives be but answerable to our Prayers.

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Let us earnestly beg of God, that his watchful and merciful Providence would undertake the care of us ; that he would fit and prepare us for every condition which he hath designed to bring us into ; and that he would teach us to demean our selves in it as we ought ; that he would consider our frailties, and *lay no greater load of affliction upon us, than he will give us grace and strength to bear ;* that if he sees it good to exercise any of us with Afflictions and Sufferings in any kind, he would make us *able to stand in that evil day, and when we have done all to stand.*

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And if instead of vainmurmurings, and complaints, and terrifying our selves with fears of what may never happen, we would, after the example of holy *David*, *betake our selves to Prayer*, and by this means engage the Providence of God for our protection from Evil, or for our support under it; we should certainly do much better for our selves, and contribute much more, than we can do any other way, to the prevention of any evil that we can fear, or to the mitigating or shortning of it, as to God's infinite Wisdom and Goodness shall seem best.

And let us always be mindful of that caution which our Saviour gives to his Disciples, that they might always be in a due preparation for the coming of our Lord to Judgment, *Luke 21. 34, 35, 36. Take heed*

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to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

This caution and counsel does proportionably hold, as to our preparation for any other evil day of affliction and suffering in this World; that we should beware of sensuality, and an inordinate love to the things of this World, and care about them; because these soften and effeminate our Spirits, and render them unfit for the day of adversity: and that we should *watch and pray*; because these are the best preparations against an evil day, and perhaps may prevent it, at least as to our

Faith in God, and in Christ,

selves, if God think it fit for us, and count us worthy to escape it.

To conclude then this whole Discourse. In all our fears and troubles, in all afflictions and adversities that may happen to us in this World, let us *encourage our selves in the Lord our God, the Father of mercy, and the God of all consolation; and in his blessed Son Jesus Christ our Lord, the high priest of our profession, and the author and finisher of our faith; whom God hath exalted far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come, and hath given him to be head over all things to his Church; remembering that we and all our concernments are in the hands of his Providence, where we are infinitely safer than in any Counsel and Wisdom of our own. And if after all, it be the Will of God to exercise*

cise any of us with more than ordinary tryals, *to lay affliction upon our loins, and to suffer men to ride over our heads, as the Psalmist expresseth it, let us, as St. Peter exhorts, commit the keeping of our Souls to him in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator, who is able to keep that which is committed to him, and to preserve us to his heavenly kingdom; which let us all humbly and earnestly beg, for the sake of Jesus Christ; To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, might, majesty and dominion now and for ever.*

Serm. 15.

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